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FREETHOUGHT ...

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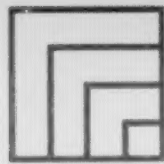
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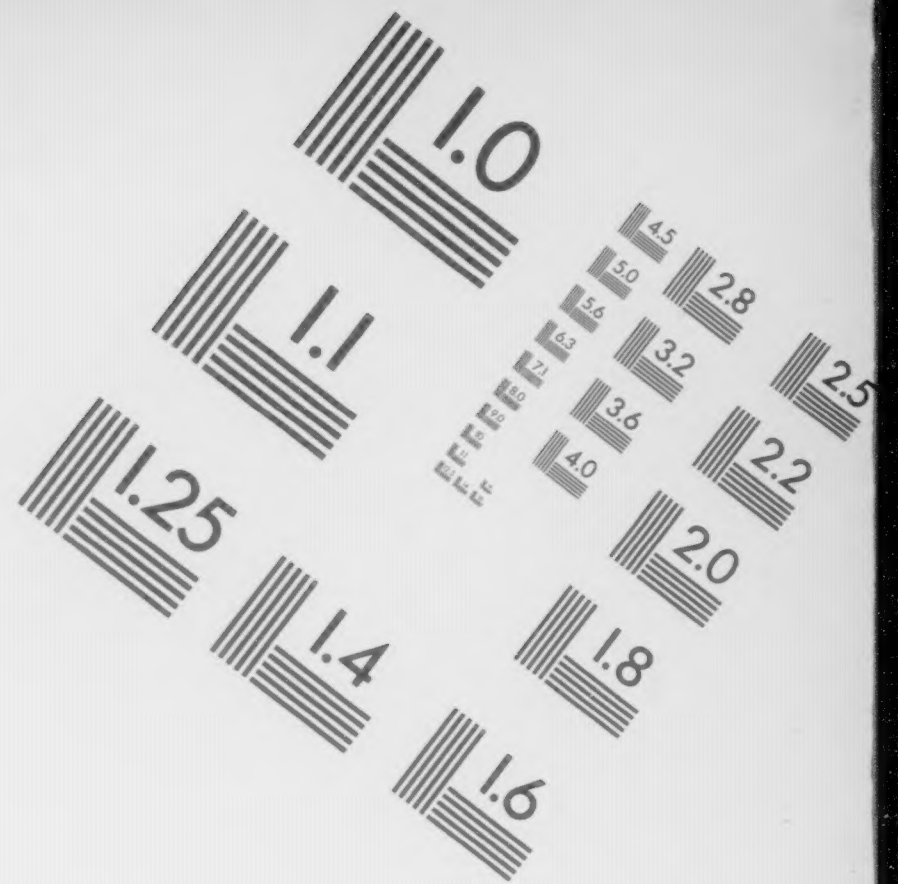
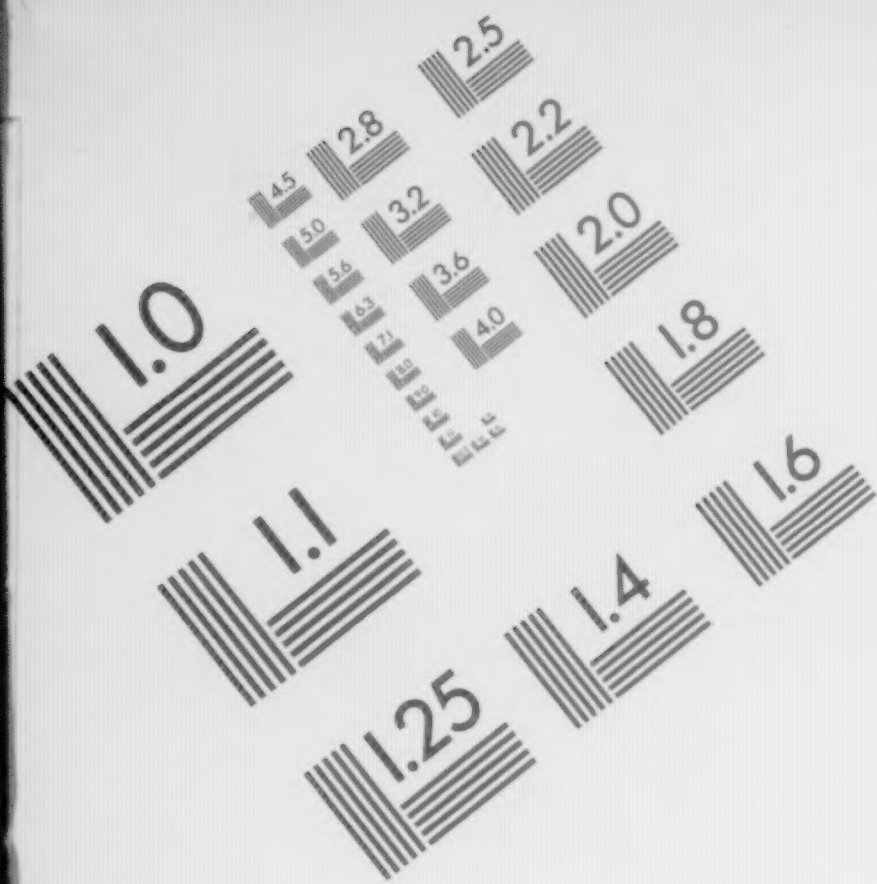


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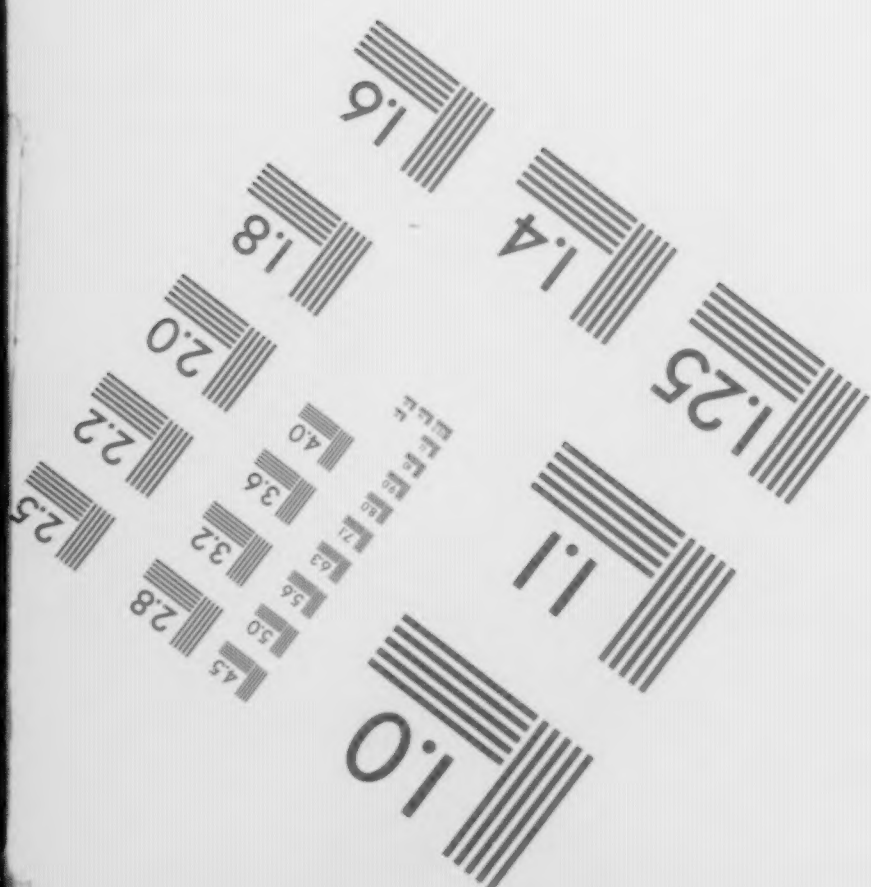
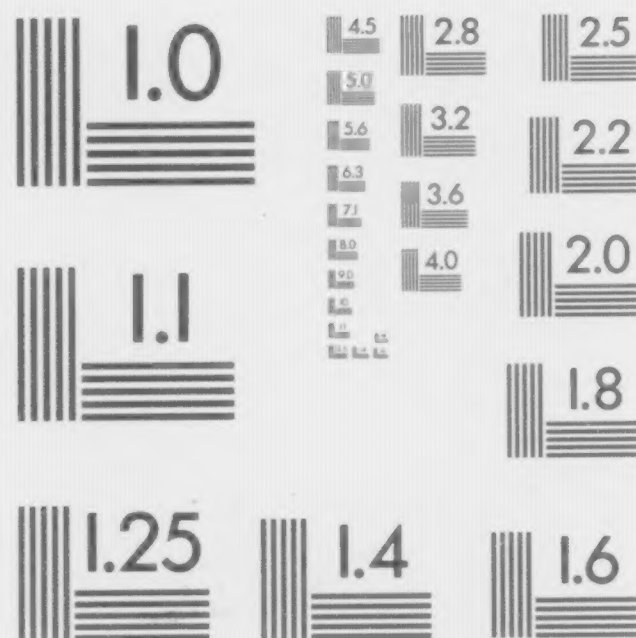
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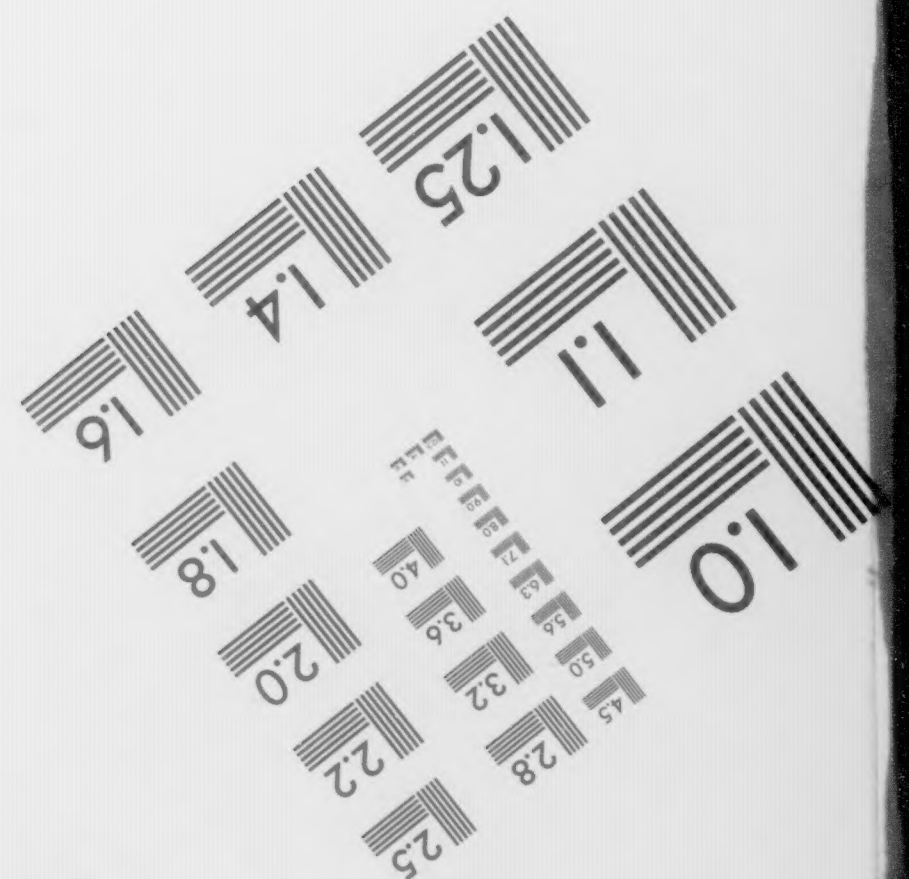
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A SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
FREETHOUGHT

ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY  
JOHN M. ROBERTSON

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I

(ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED)

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TO  
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## PREFACE

THIS, the third edition, represents a considerable expansion of the second (1906), which in its turn was a considerable expansion of the first (1899). The book now somewhat approximates, in point of fullness, to the modest ideal aimed at. Anything much fuller would cease to be a "Short History."

The process of revision, carried on since the last issue, has, I hope, meant some further advance towards correctness, and some improvement in arrangement—a particularly difficult matter in such a book. As before, the many critical *excursus* have been so printed that they may be recognized and skipped by those readers who care to follow only the narrative. The chapter on the nineteenth century, though much expanded, like those on the eighteenth, remains, I fear, open to objection on the score of scantiness. I can only plead that the ample and excellent work of Mr. A. W. Benn has now substantially met the need for a fuller survey of that period.

It is fitting that I should acknowledge the generous critical reception given by most reviewers to the previous editions of a book which, breaking as it did new ground, lacked the gain from previous example that accrues to most historical writing. My many debts to historians of culture are, I trust, indicated in the notes; but I have to repeat my former acknowledgments as to the *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* of my dead friend, J. M. Wheeler, inasmuch as the aid I have had from his manifold research does not thus appear on the surface.



It remains to add my thanks to a number of friendly correspondents who have assisted me by pointing out shortcomings and errors. Further assistance of the same kind will be gratefully welcomed. It is still my hope that the book may help some more leisured student in the construction of a more massive record of the development of rational thought on the side of human life with which it deals.

An apology is perhaps due to the purchasers of the second edition, which is now superseded by a fuller record. I can but plead that I have been unable otherwise to serve their need; and express a hope that the low price of the present edition will be a compensation.

J. M. R.

September, 1914.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT

### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTORY

##### § 1. *Origin and Meaning of the Word*

THE words "freethinking" and "freethinker" first appear in English literature about the end of the seventeenth century, and seem to have originated there and then, as we do not find them earlier in French or in Italian,<sup>1</sup> the only other modern literatures wherein the phenomena for which the words stand had previously arisen.

The title of "atheist" had been from time immemorial applied to every shade of serious heresy by the orthodox, as when the early Christians were so described by the image-adoring polytheists around them; and in Latin Christendom the term *infidelis*, translating the *ἀπίστος* of the New Testament, which primarily applied to Jews and pagans,<sup>2</sup> was easily extensible, as in the writings of Augustine, to all who challenged or doubted articles of ordinary Christian belief, all alike being regarded as consigned to perdition.<sup>3</sup> It is by this line of descent that the term "infidelity," applied to doubt on such doctrines as that of the future state, comes up in England in the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> It implied no systematic or critical thinking. The label of "deist," presumably self-applied by the bearers, begins to come into use in French about the middle of the sixteenth century;<sup>5</sup> and that of "naturalist," also presumably chosen by those who bore it, came into currency about the same time. Lechler traces the latter term in the Latin form as far back as the MS. of the *Heptaplomeres* of Bodin,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, 1841, p. 458; A. S. Farrar, *Critical History of Freethought*, 1862, p. 588; Larousse's *Dictionnaire*, art. LIBRE PENSÉE; Sayous, *Les déistes anglais et le Christianisme*, 1882, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus is made to apply it either to his disciples or to willing followers in Matt. xvii, 17, where the implication seems to be that lack of faith alone prevents miraculous cures. So with *ἀπίστος* in Matt. xiii, 58. In the Epistles, a pagan as such is *ἀπίστος*—e.g.,

1 Cor. vi, 6. Here the Vulgate has *infideles*: in Matt. xiii, 58, the word is *incredulitatem*.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Luke xii, 48; Tit. i, 15; Rev. xxi, 8.

<sup>4</sup> In the prologue to the first print of the old (1196) *Revelation of the Monk of Evesham* 1482.

<sup>5</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. VIRET, Note D.



dated 1588; but it was common before that date, as De Mornay in the preface to his *De la Vérité de la religion chrétienne* (1581) declaims "against the false naturalists (that is to say, professors of the knowledge of nature and natural things)"; and Montaigne in one of his later essays (1588) has the phrase "*nous autres naturalistes*."<sup>1</sup> Apart from these terms, those commonly used in French in the seventeenth century were *bel esprit* (sometimes, though not necessarily, connoting unbelief), *esprit fort* and *libertin*, the latter being used in the sense of a religious doubter by Corneille, Molière, and Bayle.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to have first come into use as one of the hostile names for the "Brethren of the Free Spirit," a pantheistic and generally heretical sect which became prominent in the thirteenth century, and flourished widely, despite destructive persecution, till the fifteenth. Their doctrine being antinomian, and their practice often extravagant, they were accused by Churchmen of licentiousness, so that in their case the name *Libertini* had its full latitude of application. In the sixteenth century the name of Libertines is found borne, voluntarily or otherwise, by a similar sect, probably springing from some remnant of the first, but calling themselves *Spirituales*, who came into notice in Flanders, were favoured in France by Marguerite of Navarre, sister of Francis I, and became to some extent associated with sections of the Reformed Church. They were attacked by Calvin in the treatise *Contre la secte fanatique et furieuse des Libertins* (1544 and 1545).<sup>3</sup> The name of *Libertini* was not in the sixteenth century applied by any Genevese writer to any political party;<sup>4</sup> but by later historians it was in time either fastened on or adopted by the main body of Calvin's opponents in Geneva, who probably included some members of the sect or movement in question. They were accused by him of general depravity, a judgment not at all to be acquiesced in, in view of the controversial habits of the age; though they probably included antinomian Christians and libertines in the modern sense, as well as orthodox lovers of freedom and orderly non-Christians. As the first Brethren of the Free Spirit, so-called, seem to have appeared in Italy (where they are supposed to have derived, like the Waldenses, from the immigrant Paulicians of the Eastern Church), the name *Libertini* presumably originated there. But in Renaissance

<sup>1</sup> *Essais*, liv. iii, ch. 12. Edit. Firmin-Didot, 1892, ii, 518.  
<sup>2</sup> See F. T. Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 1896, Introd. § 11, for a good general view of the bearings of the word. It stood at times for simple independence of spirit, apart from religious freethinking. Thus Madame de Sevigné (Lettre à Mme. de Grignan, 28 juin, 1671) writes: "Je suis libertine, plus que vous."  
<sup>3</sup> Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, i, 383 sq.; Perrens as cited, pp. 5-6; Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.*, 13 Cent., part ii, ch. v, §§ 9-12, and notes; 14 Cent., part ii, ch. v, §§ 3-5; 16 Cent., § 3, part ii, ch. ii, §§ 38-42.  
<sup>4</sup> A. Bossert, *Calvin*, 1906, p. 151.

Italy an unbeliever seems usually to have been called simply *ateo*, or *infedele*, or *pagano*. "The standing phrase was *non aver fede*."<sup>1</sup>

In England, before and at the Reformation, both "infidel" and "faithless" usually had the theological force of "non-Christian." Thus Tyndale says of the Turks that though they "knowledge one God," yet they "have erred and been *faithless* these eight hundred years"; adding the same of the Jews.<sup>2</sup> Throughout Elizabeth's reign, "infidel" seems thus to have commonly signified only a "heathen" or Jew or Mohammedan. Bishop Jewel, for instance, writes that the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain "then were infidels";<sup>3</sup> and the word appears to be normally used in that sense, or with a playful force derived from that, by the divines, poets, and dramatists, including Shakespeare, as by Milton in his verse.<sup>4</sup> Ben Jonson has the phrase:

I did not expect  
 To meet an infidel, much less an atheist,  
 Here in Love's list.<sup>5</sup>

One or two earlier writers,<sup>6</sup> indeed, use "infidel" in the modern sense; and it was at times so used by early Elizabethans.<sup>7</sup> But Foxe brackets together "Jews, Turks, or infidels";<sup>8</sup> and Hooper, writing in 1547, speaks, like Jewel, of the heathen as "the infidels."<sup>9</sup> Hooker (1553-1600), in his Fifth Sermon, § 9,<sup>10</sup> uses the word somewhat indefinitely, but in his margin makes "Pagans and Infidels" equivalent to "Pagans and Turks." So also, in the *Ecclesiastical Polity*,<sup>11</sup> "infidels" means men of another religion. On the title-page of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1574), on the other hand, we have "the infidelitie of atheists"; but so late as 1600 we find "J. H." [John Healy], the translator of Augustine's *City of God*, rendering *infideles* and *homines infideles* by "unbelievers."<sup>12</sup> "Infidelity," in the modern sense, occurs in Sir T. Browne.<sup>13</sup>

In England, as in the rest of Europe, however, the phenomenon of freethought had existed, in specific form, long before it could express itself in propagandist writings, or find any generic name save those of atheism and infidelity; and the process of naming was as fortuitous as it generally is in matters of intellectual evolution. Phrases approximating to "free thought" occur soon after the Restoration. Thus Glanvill repeatedly writes sympathetically of

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, *Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. ed. 1892, p. 542, note.  
<sup>2</sup> *Answer to Sir T. More*, Parker Soc. rep. 1850, pp. 53-54.  
<sup>3</sup> *Controversy with Harding*, Parker Soc. rep. of *Works*, 1845, i, 305.  
<sup>4</sup> *Paradise Lost*, i, 582; *Samson Agonistes*, 221.  
<sup>5</sup> *The New Inn*, 1628-9, Act iii, Sc. 2.  
<sup>6</sup> *The New English Dictionary* gives instances in 1526 and 1552.  
<sup>7</sup> If Mr. Froude's transcript of a manuscript can here be relied on. *History*, ed. 1870, x, 545. (Ed. 1872, xi, 199.)  
<sup>8</sup> *Four Questions Propounded* (pref. to *Acts and Monuments*).  
<sup>9</sup> *Answer to the Bishop of Winchester*, Parker Soc. rep., p. 129.  
<sup>10</sup> *Works*, ed. 1850, ii, 752.  
<sup>11</sup> B. V, ch. i, § 3. *Works*, i, 420.  
<sup>12</sup> *De civitate Dei*, xx, 30, end; xxi, 5, beginn., etc.  
<sup>13</sup> *Religio Medici*, 1642, pt. i, §§ 19, 20.



"free philosophers"<sup>1</sup> and "free philosophy."<sup>2</sup> In 1667 we find Sprat, the historian of the Royal Society, describing the activity of that body as having arisen or taken its special direction through the conviction that in science, as in warfare, better results had been obtained by a "free way" than by methods not so describable.<sup>3</sup> As Sprat is careful to insist, the members of the Royal Society, though looked at askance by most of the clergy<sup>4</sup> and other pietists, were not as such to be classed as unbelievers, the leading members being strictly orthodox; but a certain number seem to have shown scant concern for religion;<sup>5</sup> and while it was one of the Society's first rules not to debate any theological question whatever,<sup>6</sup> the intellectual atmosphere of the time was such that some among those who followed the "free way" in matters of natural science would be extremely likely to apply it to more familiar problems.<sup>7</sup> At the same period we find Spinoza devoting his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) to the advocacy of *libertas philosophandi*; and such a work was bound to have a general European influence. It was probably, then, a result of such express assertion of the need and value of freedom in the mental life that the name "freethinker" came into English use in the last quarter of the century.

Before "deism" came into English vogue, the names for unbelief, even deistic, were simply "infidelity" and "atheism"—e.g., Bishop Fotherby's *Atheomastix* (1622), Baxter's *Unreasonableness of Infidelity* (1655) and *Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667), *passim*. Bishop Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1677) appears to be the first published attack on deism by name. His *Origines Sacrae* (1662) deals chiefly with deistic views, but calls unbelievers in general "atheists." Cudworth, in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (written 1671, published 1678), does not speak of deism, attacking only atheism, and was himself suspected of Socinianism. W. Sherlock, in his *Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies* (2nd ed., 1682), attacks "atheists and infidels," but says nothing of "deists." That term, first coined, as we have seen, in French, seems first to have found common currency in France—e.g., on the title-pages of the apologetic works of Marin Mersenne, 1623 and 1624. The term "atheist"

<sup>1</sup> Essay II, *Of Scepticism and Certainty* (rep. of reply to Thomas White, app. to *Sceptis Scientifica* in 1665) in Glanvill's collected *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion*, 1676, pp. 38, 44.

<sup>2</sup> *PLUS ULTRA: OR, The Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the Days of Aristotle*, 1668, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Royal Society*, 1667, p. 73. Describing the beginnings of the Society, Sprat remarks that Oxford had at that time many members "who had begun a free way of reasoning" (p. 53).

<sup>4</sup> Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in Eng.*, 1-vol. ed. p. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Sprat, p. 375 (printed as 367). <sup>6</sup> *Id.*, p. 83. The French Academy had the same rule.

<sup>7</sup> Some of Sprat's uses of the term have a very general sense, as when he writes (p. 87) that "Amsterdam is a place of Trade without the mixture of men of freer thoughts." The latter is an old application, as in "the free sciences" or "the liberal arts."

was often applied at random at this period; but atheism did exist.

When the orthodox Boyle pushed criticism in physical science under such a title as *The Sceptical Chemist*, the principle could not well be withheld from application to religion; and it lay in the nature of the case that the name "freethinker," like that of "skeptic," should come to attach itself specially to those who doubted where doubt was most resented and most resisted. At length the former term became specific.

In the meantime the word "rationalist," which in English has latterly tended to become the prevailing name for freethinkers, had made its appearance, without securing much currency. In a London news-letter dated October 14, 1646, it is stated, concerning the Presbyterians and Independents, that "there is a new sect sprung up among them, and these are the *rationalists*; and what their reason dictates to them in Church or State stands for good until they be convinced with better."<sup>1</sup> On the Continent, the equivalent Latin term (*rationalista*) had been applied about the beginning of the century to the Aristotelian humanists of the Helmstadt school by their opponents,<sup>2</sup> apparently in the same sense as that in which Bacon used the term *rationales* in his *Redargutio Philosophiarum*—"Rationales autem, araneorum more, telas ex se conficiunt." Under this title he contrasts (as spiders spinning webs out of themselves) the mere Aristotelean speculators, who framed *a priori* schemes of Nature, with empiricists, who, "like ants, collect something and use it," preferring to both the "bees" who should follow the ideal method prescribed by himself.<sup>3</sup> There is here no allusion to heterodox opinion on religion. [Bishop Hurst, who (perhaps following the *Apophthegms*) puts a translation of Bacon's words, with "rationalists" for *rationales*, as one of the mottoes of his *History of Rationalism*, is thus misleading his readers as to Bacon's meaning.] In 1661 John Amos Comenius, in his *Theologia Naturalis*, applies the name *rationalista* to the Socinians and deists; without, however, leading to its general use in that sense. Later we shall meet with the term in English discussions between 1680 and 1715, applied usually to rationalizing Christians; but as a name for opponents of orthodox religion it was for the time superseded, in English, by "freethinker."

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Archbishop Trench, *The Study of Words*, 19th ed., p. 230, from the *Clarendon State Papers*, App. Vol. III, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Art. RATIONALISMUS AND SUPERNATURALISMUS in Herzog and Plitt's *Real-Encyk. für prot. Theol. und Kirche*, 1883, xii, 509.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophical Works of Bacon*, ed. Ellis and Spedding, iii, 583. See the same saying quoted among the *Apophthegms* given in Tenison's *Baconiana* (Routledge's ed. of *Works*, p. 895).



In the course of the eighteenth century the term was adopted in other languages. The first French translation (1714) of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking* is entitled *Discours sur la liberté de penser*; and the term "freethinkers" is translated on the title-page by *esprit fort*, and in the text by a periphrasis of *liberté de penser*. Later in the century, however, we find Voltaire in his correspondence frequently using the substantive *franc-pensant*, a translation of the English term which subsequently gave way to *libre penseur*. The modern German term *Freigeist*, found as early as 1702 in the allusion to "Alten Quäcker und neuen Frey-Geister" on the title-page of the folio *Anabaptisticum et Enthusiasticum Pantheon*, probably derives from the old "Brethren of the Free Spirit"; while *Schöngeist* arose as a translation of *bel esprit*. In the middle of the eighteenth century *Freidenker* came into German use as a translation of the English term.

In a general sense "free thoughts" was a natural expression, and we have it in Ben Jonson: "Being free master of mine own free thoughts."<sup>1</sup> But not till about the year 1700 did the phrase begin to have a special application to religious matters. The first certain instance thus far noted of the use of the term "freethinker" is in a letter of Molyneux to Locke, dated April 6, 1697,<sup>2</sup> where Toland is spoken of as a "candid free-thinker." In an earlier letter, dated December 24, 1695, Molyneux speaks of a certain book on religion as somewhat lacking in "freedom of thought";<sup>3</sup> and in Burnet's *Letters*<sup>4</sup> occurs still earlier the expression "men.....of freer thoughts." In the *New English Dictionary* a citation is given from the title-page of S. Smith's brochure, *The Religious Impostor..... dedicated to Doctor S-l-m-n and the rest of the new Religious Fraternity of Freethinkers, near Leather-Sellers' Hall. Printed .....in the first year of Grace and Freethinking*, conjecturally dated 1692. It is thought to refer to the sect of "Freeseekers" mentioned in Luttrell's *Brief Historical Relation* (iii, 56) under date 1693. In that case it is not unbelievers that are in question. So in Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* (first ed. 1699) the expression "freethought" has a general and not a particular sense;<sup>5</sup> and in Baker's *Reflections upon Learning*, also published in 1699, in the remark: "After the way of freethinking had been lai'd open by my Lord Bacon, it was soon after greedily followed";<sup>6</sup> the reference is, of course, to scientific and not to religious thought.

<sup>1</sup> *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), Act iii, sc. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of his Friends*, 1708, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Rotterdam, 1696, p. 195.

<sup>5</sup> B. II, pt. ii, § 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. on Logic, cited by Professor Fowler in his ed. of the *Novum Organum*, 1878, introd. p. 118.

But in Shaftesbury's *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709) the phrases "free-writers" and "a free-thought"<sup>1</sup> have reference to "advanced" opinions, though in his letters to Ainsworth (May 10, 1707) he had written, "I am glad to find your love of reason and freethought. Your piety and virtue I know you will always keep."<sup>2</sup> Compare the *Miscellaneous Reflections* (v, 3) in the *Characteristics*<sup>3</sup> (1711), where the tendency to force the sense from the general to the special is incidentally illustrated. Shaftesbury, however, includes the term "free liver" among the "naturally honest appellations" that have become opprobrious.

In Swift's *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* (1708) the specialized word is found definitely and abusively connoting religious unbelief: "The atheists, libertines, despisers of religion—that is to say, all those who usually pass under the name of freethinkers"; Steele and Addison so use it in the *Tatler* in 1709;<sup>4</sup> and Leslie so uses the term in his *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated* (1711). The anonymous essay, *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*, by Deslandes (Amsterdam, 1712), is translated in English (1713) as *Reflections on the Death of Free-thinkers*, and the translator uses the term in his prefatory Letter to the Author, beside putting it in the text (pp. 50, 85, 97, 102, 106, etc.), where the original had *esprit fort*.

It was not till 1713, however, that Anthony Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking, occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers*, gave the word a universal notoriety, and brought it into established currency in controversy, with the normal significance of "deist," Collins having entirely repudiated atheism. Even after this date, and indeed in full conformity with the definition in Collins's opening sentence, Ambrose Philips took *The Freethinker* as the title of a weekly journal (begun in 1718) on the lines of the *Spectator*, with no heterodox leaning;<sup>5</sup> the contributors including Boulter, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and the son of Bishop Burnet. But despite this attempt to keep the word "freethinking" as a name for simple freedom from prejudice in secular affairs, the tendency to specialize it as aforesaid was irresistible. As names go, it was on the whole a good one; and the bitterness with which it was generally handled on the orthodox side showed that its implicit claim was felt to be disturbing, though some antagonists of course claimed from the first that they were as "free" under the law of

<sup>1</sup> §§ 3 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, 1746, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Orig. ed. iii, 305, 306, 311; ed. J. M. R., 1900, ii, 349, 353.

<sup>4</sup> Nos. 12, 111, 135.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Johnson on A. Philips in *Lives of the Poets*. Swift, too, issued his *Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs* in 1714.



right reason as any skeptic.<sup>1</sup> At this time of day the word may be allowed prescriptive standing, as having no more drawbacks than most other names for schools of thought or attitudes of mind, and as having been admitted into most European languages. The question-begging element is not greater in this than in many other terms of similar intention, such as "rationalism"; and it incurs no such charge of absurdity as lies against the invidious religious term, "infidelity." The term "infidel" invites "fidel."

A plausible objection may, indeed, arise on the score that such a term as "freethought" should not be set up by thinkers who almost invariably reject the term "freewill"—the rationalistic succession having for two hundred and fifty years been carried on mainly by determinists. But the issues raised by the two terms are on wholly different planes; and while in both cases the imperfection of the instrument of language is apparent, it is not in the present case a cause of psychological confusion, as it is in the discussion of the nature of will. The freewill fallacy consists in applying universally to the process of judgment and preference (which is a process of natural causation like another) a conception relevant only to human or animal action, as interfered with or unaffected by *extraneous* compulsion. To the processes of nature, organic or inorganic, the concepts "free" and "bond" are equally irrelevant: a tiger is no more "free" to crave for grass and recoil from flesh than is water to flow uphill; while, on the other hand, such "appetites" are not rationally to be described as forms of bondage. Only as a mode distinguishable from its contrary can "freedom" be predicated of any procedure, and it is so predicated of actions; whereas the whole category of volitions is alleged and denied by the verbal disputants to be "free." Some attempt to save the case by distinguishing between free and alleged "unfree" volitions; but the latter are found to be simply cases of choices dictated by intense need, as in the case of deadly thirst. The difference, therefore, is only one of degree of impulse, not in the fact of choice.

The term "freewill," therefore, is irrational, as being wholly irrelevant to the conception of volition. But "freethought," on

<sup>1</sup> Thus Bentley, writing as *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* against Collins, claims to have been "train'd up and exercis'd in *Free Thought* from my youth." Dr. Samuel Clarke somewhere makes a similar statement; and the point is raised by Berkeley in his *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. i, § 10. One of the first replies to Collins, *A Letter to the Free-thinkers*, By a *Layman*, dated February 24, 1712-13, likewise insists on the right of believers to the title, declaring that "a free-thinker may be the best or worst of men." Shaftesbury on the other side protests that the passion of orthodoxy "holds up the intended chains and fetters and declares its resolution to enslave" (*Characteristics*, iii, 305; ed. 1900, ii, 345). Later, the claim of Bentley and Clarke became common; and one tract on Christian evidences, *A Layman's Faith*, 1732, whose author shows not a grain of the critical spirit, professes to be written "by a Freethinker and a Christian."

the other hand, points to an actual difference in *degree of employment of the faculty of criticism*. The proposition is that some men think more "freely" than others in that they are (a) not terrorized by any veto on criticism, and (b) not hampered, or less hampered, by ignorant pre-suppositions. In both cases there is a real discrimination. There is no allegation that, absolutely speaking, "thought is free" in the sense of the orthodox formula; on the contrary, it is asserted that the rationalist's critical course is specifically determined by his intellectual structure and his preparation, and that it is sometimes different structure, but more often different preparation, that determines the anti-critical or counter-critical attitude of the believer. Change in the preparation, it is contended, will put the latter in fuller use of his potential resources; his inculcated fear of doubt and docility of assent being simply acquiescences in vetoes on his *attention* to certain matters for reflection—that is to say, in arbitrary limitations of his action. It is further implied that the instructed man, other things being equal, is "freer" to think than the uninstructed, as being less obstructed; but for the purpose of our history it is sufficient to posit the discriminations above noted.

The essential thing to be realized is the fact that from its earliest stages humanity has suffered from conventional or traditionary hindrances to the use of judgment. This holds good even as to the early play of the simple inventive faculty, all innovations in implements being met by the inertia of habit; and when men reached the stages of ritual practice, social construction, and religious doctrine, the forces of repression became powerful in proportion to the seriousness of the problem. It is only in modern times that freedom in these relations has come to be generally regarded as permissible; and it has always been over questions of religion that the strife has been keenest.

For practical purposes, then, freethought may be defined as a conscious reaction against some phase or phases of conventional or traditional doctrine in religion—on the one hand, a claim to think freely, in the sense not of disregard for logic, but of special loyalty to it, on problems to which the past course of things has given a great intellectual and practical importance; on the other hand, the actual practice of such thinking. This sense, which is substantially agreed on, will on one or other side sufficiently cover those phenomena of early or rudimentary freethinking which wear the guise of simple concrete opposition to given doctrines or systems, whether by way of special demur or of the obtrusion of a new cult or doctrine. In either case, the claim to think in a measure freely is



implicit in the criticism or the new affirmation; and such primary movements of the mind cannot well be separated, in psychology or in history, from the fully conscious practice of criticism in the spirit of pure truth-seeking, or from the claim that such free examination is profoundly important to moral and intellectual health. Modern freethought, specially so-called, is only one of the developments of the slight primary capacity of man to doubt, to reason, to improve on past thinking, to assert his personality as against sacrosanct and menacing authority. Concretely considered, it has proceeded by the support and stimulus of successive accretions of actual knowledge; and the modern consciousness of its own abstract importance emerged by way of an impression or inference from certain social phenomena, as well as in terms of self-asserting instinct. There is no break in its evolution from primitive mental states, any more than in the evolution of the natural sciences from primitive observation. What particularly accrues to the state of conscious and systematic discrimination, in the one case as in the other, is just the immense gain in security of possession.

## § 2. Previous Histories

It is somewhat remarkable that in England this phenomenon has thus far<sup>1</sup> had no general historic treatment save at the hands of ecclesiastical writers, who, in most cases, have regarded it solely as a form of more or less perverse hostility to their own creed. The modern scientific study of religions, which has yielded so many instructive surveys, almost of necessity excludes from view the specific play of freethought, which in the religion-making periods is to be traced rather by its religious results than by any record of its expression. All histories of philosophy, indeed, in some degree necessarily recognize it; and such a work as Lange's *History of Materialism* may be regarded as part—whether or not sound in its historical treatment—of a complete history of freethought, dealing specially with general philosophic problems. But of freethought as a reasoned revision or rejection of current religious doctrines by more or less practical people, we have no regular history by a professed freethinker, though there are many monographs and surveys of periods.

The latest and freshest sketch of the kind is Professor J. B. Bury's brief *History of Freedom of Thought* (1913),

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1898.

notable for the force of its championship of the law of liberty. The useful compilation of the late Mr. Charles Watts, entitled *Freethought: Its Rise, Progress, and Triumph* (n.d.), deals with freethought in relation only to Christianity. Apart from treatises which broadly sketch the development of knowledge and of opinion, the nearest approaches to a general historic treatment are the *Dictionnaire des Athées* of Sylvain Maréchal (1800: 3e édit., par J. B. L. Germond, 1853) and the *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* by the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. The quaint work of Maréchal, expanded by his friend Lalande, exhibits much learning, but is made partly fantastic by its sardonic plan of including a number of typical religionists (including Job, John, and Jesus Christ!), some of whose utterances are held to lead logically to atheism. Mr. Wheeler's book is in every respect the more trustworthy.

In excuse of Maréchal's method, it may be noted that the prevailing practice of Christian apologists had been to impute atheism to heterodox theistic thinkers of all ages. The *Historia universalis Atheismi et Atheorum falso et merito suspectorum* of J. F. Reimmann (Hildesiae, 1725) exhibits this habit both in its criticism and in its practice, as do the *Theses de Atheismo et Superstitione* of Buddeus (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1716). These were the standard treatises of their kind for the eighteenth century, and seem to be the earliest systematic treatises in the nature of a history of freethought, excepting a *Historia Naturalismi* by A. Tribbechov (Jenæ, 1700) and a *Historia Atheismi breviter delineata* by Jenkinus Thomasius (Altdorf, 1692; Basileæ, 1709; London, 1716). In the same year with Reimmann's *Historia* appeared J. A. Fabricius's *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus scriptorum qui veritatem religionis Christianæ adversus Atheos, Epicureos, Deistas, seu Naturalistas .....asseruerunt* (Hamburgi), in which it is contended (cap. viii) that many philosophers have been falsely described as atheists; but in the *Freydenker Lexicon* of J. A. Trinius (Leipzig, 1759), planned as a supplement to the work of Fabricius, are included such writers as Sir Thomas Browne and Dryden.

The works of the late Rev. John Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, and *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, which, though not constituting a literary whole, collectively cover a great deal of historical ground, must be expressly excepted from the above characterization of clerical histories of freethought, in respect of their liberality of view. They deal largely, however, with general or philosophical skepticism, which is a special development of freethought, often by way of reasonings in which many freethinkers do not acquiesce. (All strict skeptics, that is to say—as distinguished from religionists who profess skepticism up to a certain point by way of making a surrender to orthodox



dogmatism<sup>1</sup>—are freethinkers; but most freethinkers are not strictly skeptics.) The history of philosophic skepticism, again, is properly and methodically treated in the old work of Carl Friedrich Stäudlin, *Geschichte und Geist des Skepticismus* (2 Bde., Leipzig, 1794), the historic survey being divided into six periods: 1, Before Pyrrho; 2, from Pyrrho to Sextus; 3, from Sextus to Montaigne; 4, from Montaigne to La Mothe le Vayer; 5, from La Mothe le Vayer to Hume; 6, from Hume to Kant and Platner. The posthumous work of Émile Saisset, *Le Scepticisme: Énésidème—Pascal—Kant* (1865), is a fragment of a projected complete history of philosophic skepticism.

Stäudlin's later work, the *Geschichte des Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus* (1826), is a shorter but more general history of the strife between general freethought and supernaturalism in the Christian world and era. It deals cursorily with the intellectual attitude of the early Fathers, the early heretics, and the Scholastics; proceeding to a fuller survey of the developments since the Reformation, and covering Unitarianism, Latitudinarianism, English and French Deism, and German Rationalism of different shades down to the date of writing. Stäudlin may be described as a rationalizing supernaturalist.

Like most works on religious and intellectual history written from a religious standpoint, those of Stäudlin treat the phenomena as it were *in vacuo*, with little regard to the conditioning circumstances, economic and political; critical thought being regarded purely as a force proceeding through its own proclivities. Saisset is at very much the same point of view. Needless to say, valuable work may be done up to a certain point on this method, which is seen in full play in Hegel; and high praise is due to the learned and thoughtful treatise of R. W. Mackay, *The Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews* (2 vols. 1850), where it is partially but ably supplemented by the method of inductive science. That method, again, is freshly and forcibly applied to a restricted problem in W. A. Schmidt's *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums* (1847).

Later come the *Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus* (1853-62) and *Geschichte des Rationalismus* (1865) of the theologian Tholuck. Of these the latter is unfinished, coming down only to the middle of the eighteenth century; while the former does not exactly fulfil its title, being composed of a volume (2 Abth. 1853, 1854) on *Das akademische Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts*, and of one on *Das kirchliche Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts* (2 Abth. 1861, 1862), both being restricted to German developments. They thus give much matter extraneous to the subject, and are

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hauréau, *Histoire de la philosophie scolastique*, ed. 1870-1872, i, 543-46.

not exhaustive as to rationalism even in Germany. Hagenbach's *Die Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (2 Th. 1848, 1849), a series of lectures, translated in English, abridged, under the title *German Rationalism in its Rise, Progress, and Decline* (1865), conforms fairly to the latter title, save as regards the last clause.

Of much greater scholarly merit is the *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter, vom Ende des achten Jahrhunderts bis zum Anfange des vierzehnten*, by Hermann Reuter (1875, 1877). This is at once learned, judicious, and impartial. Its definition of "Aufklärung" is substantially in agreement with the working definition of Freethought given above.

Among other surveys of periods of innovating thought, as distinguished from histories of ecclesiastical heresy, or histories of "religious" or theological thought which only incidentally deal with heterodox opinion, should be noted the careful *Geschichte des englischen Deismus* of G. F. Lechler (1841); the slighter sketch of E. Sayous, *Les déistes anglais et le Christianisme* (1882); the somewhat diffuse work of Cesare Cantù, *Gli eretici d'Italia* (3 tom. 1865-67); the very intelligent study of Felice Tocco, *L'Eresia nel medio evo* (1884); Schmidt's *Histoire des Cathares* (2 tom. 1849); Chr. U. Hahn's learned *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter* (3 Bde. 1845-50); and the valuable research of F. T. Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xviiè siècle* (1896). A similar scholarly research for the eighteenth century in France is still lacking, and the many monographs on the more famous freethinkers leave a good deal of literary history in obscurity. Such a research has been very painstakingly made for England in the late Sir Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 2nd ed., 1881), which, however, ignores scientific thought. One of the best monographs of the kind is *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs, des origines au temps de Plutarque*, by Professor Paul Decharme (1904), a survey at once scholarly and attractive. The brilliant treatise of Mr. F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy* (1912), sketches on more speculative lines the beginnings of Greek rationalism in Ionia. The *Geschichte des Monismus im Altertum* of Prof. Dr. A. Drews (1913) is a wide survey, of great synthetic value.

Contributions to the general history of freethought, further, have been made in the works of J. W. Draper (*A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, 2 vols, 1861, many reprints; and *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, 1873, many reprints), both full of suggestion and stimulus, but requiring thorough revision as to detail; in the famous *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England* of H. T. Buckle (2 vols. 1857-61; new ed. in 1 vol. with annotations by the present writer, 1904); in the *History of the Rise and*



*Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* of W. E. H. Lecky (2 vols. 1865; R. P. A. rep. 1910), who was of Buckle's school, but fell below him in point of coherence; in the comprehensive *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* of Professor Andrew D. White (2 vols. 1896—a great expansion of his earlier essay, *The Warfare of Science*, 2nd ed. 1877); and in the essay of Mr. E. S. P. Haynes, *Religious Persecution: A Study in Political Psychology* (1904; R. P. A. rep. 1906), as well as in many histories of philosophy and of sciences.

The so-called *History of Rationalism* of the American Bishop J. F. Hurst, first published in 1865, and "revised" in 1901, is in the main a work of *odium theologicum*, dealing chiefly with the evolution of theology and criticism in Germany since the Reformation. Even to that purpose it is very inadequate. Its preface alleges that "happily the vital body of evangelical truth has received only comparatively weak and timorous attacks from the more modern representatives of the rank and rabid rationalism which reached its climax near the close of the eighteenth, and has had a continuous decline through the nineteenth, century." It urges, however, as a reason for defensive activity, the consideration that "the work of Satan is never planless"; and further pronounces that the work of rationalism "must determine its character. This work has been most injurious to the faith and life of the Church, and its deeds must therefore be its condemnation" (Introd. p. 3). Thus the latest approximation to a history of theological rationalism by a clerical writer is the most negligible.

In English, apart from studies of given periods and of the progress of science and culture, the only other approaches to a history of freethought are those of Bishop Van Mildert, the Rev. J. E. Riddle, and the Rev. Adam Storey Farrar. Van Mildert's *Historical View of the Rise and Progress of Infidelity*<sup>1</sup> constituted the Boyle Lectures for 1802-05; Mr. Riddle's *Natural History of Infidelity and Superstition in Contrast with Christian Faith* formed part of his Bampton Lectures for 1852; and Mr. Farrar produced his *Critical History of Freethought in reference to the Christian Religion* as the Bampton Lectures for 1862. All three were men of considerable reading, and their works give useful bibliographical clues; but the virulence of Van Mildert deprives his treatise of rational weight; Mr. Riddle, who in any case professes to give merely a "Natural History" or abstract argument, and not a history proper, is only somewhat more constrainedly hostile to "infidelity"; and even Mr. Farrar, the most judicial as well as the most comprehensive of the three, proceeds on the old assumption that "unbelief"

<sup>1</sup> Second ed. with enlarged Appendix (of authorities and references), 1808, 2 vols.

(from which he charitably distinguishes "doubt") generally arises from "antagonism of feeling, which wishes revelation untrue"—a thesis maintained with vehemence by the others.<sup>1</sup>

Writers so placed, indeed, could not well be expected to contemplate freethought scientifically as an aspect of mental evolution common to all civilizations, any more than to look with sympathy on the freethought which is specifically anti-Christian. The annotations to all three works, certainly, show some consciousness of the need for another temper and method than that of their text,<sup>2</sup> which is too obviously, perhaps inevitably, composed for the satisfaction of the ordinary orthodox animus of their respective periods; but even the best remains not so much a history as an indictment. In the present sketch, framed though it be from the rationalistic standpoint, it is proposed to draw up not a counter indictment, but a more or less dispassionate account of the main historical phases of freethought, viewed on the one hand as expressions of the rational or critical spirit, playing on the subject-matter of religion, and on the other hand as sociological phenomena conditioned by social forces, in particular the economic and political. The lack of any previous general survey of a scientific character will, it is hoped, be taken into account in passing judgment on its schematic defects as well as its inevitable flaws of detail.

### § 3. *The Psychology of Freethinking*

Though it is no part of our business here to elaborate the psychology of doubt and belief, it may be well to anticipate a possible criticism on the lines of recent psychological speculation, and to indicate at the outset the practical conception on which the present survey broadly proceeds. To begin with, the conception of freethinking implies that of hindrance, resistance, coercion, difficulty; and as regards objective obstacles the type of all hindrance is restraint upon freedom of speech or publication. In other words, all such restraint is a check upon thinking. On reflection it soon becomes clear that where men dare not say or write what they think, the very power of thinking is at length impaired in the ablest, while the natural stimulus to new thought is withdrawn from the rest. No man can properly develop his mind without contact with other minds, suggestion and criticism being alike factors in every fruitful mental evolution; and though for some the

<sup>1</sup> Farrar, pref., p. x; Riddle, p. 99; Van Mildert, i, 105, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Van Mildert even recast his first manuscript. See the *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 1863, p. 35.



atmosphere of personal intercourse is but slightly necessary to the process of mental construction, even for these the prospect of promulgation is probably essential to the undertaking of the task; and the study of other *writers* is a condition of useful ratiocination. In any case, it is certain that the exercise of argument is a condition of intellectual growth. Not one man in a million will or can argue closely with himself on issues on which he knows he can say nothing and can never overtly act; and for the average man all reasoning on great problems is a matter of prompting from without. The simple fact that the conversation of uneducated people runs so largely to citation of what "he says" makes clear this dependence. Each brings something to the common store, and progress is set up by "pooling" the mass of small intellectual variations or originalities. Thus in the long run freedom of speech is the measure of a generation's intellectual capacity;<sup>1</sup> and the promoters of such freedom are typically the truest servants of progress.

On the other hand, there is still a common disposition to ascribe to a species of intellectual malice the disturbance that criticism causes to the holders of established beliefs. Recent writers have pressed far the theorem that "will" enters as an element into every mental act, thus giving a momentary appearance of support to the old formula that unbelief is the result of an arbitrary or sinister perversity of individual choice. Needless to say, however, the new theorem—which inverts without refuting Spinoza's denial of the entity of volition—applies equally to acts of belief; and it is a matter of the simplest concrete observation that, in so far as will or wilfulness in the ordinary sense operates in the sphere of religion, it is at least as obvious and as active on the side of belief<sup>2</sup> as on the other. A moment's reflection on the historic phenomena of orthodox resistance to criticism will satisfy any student that, whatever may have been the stimulus on the side of heresy, the antagonism it arouses is largely the index of primary passion—the spontaneous resentment of the believer whose habits are disturbed. His will normally decides his action, without any process of judicial deliberation.

It is another way of stating the same fact to point out the fallacy of the familiar assumption that freethinking represents a bias to "negation." In the nature of the case, the believer has to do at

<sup>1</sup> Cp. W. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums*, 1847, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> Its legitimacy on that side is expressly contended for by Professor William James in his volume *The Will to Believe* (1897), the positions of which were criticized by the present writer in the *University Magazine*, April and June, 1897.

least as much negation as his opponents; and if again we scan history in this connection, we shall see cause to conclude that the temperamental tendency to negation—which is a form of variation like another—is abundantly common on the side of religious conservatism. Nowhere is there more habitual opposition to new ideas as such. At best the believer, so-called, rejects a given proposition or suggestion because it clashes with something he already believes. The new proposition, however, has often been reached by way not of preliminary negation of the belief in question, but of constructive explanation, undertaken to bring observed facts into theoretic harmony. Thus the innovator has only contingently put aside the old belief because it clashes with something he believes in a more vital way; and he has done this with circumspection, whereas his opponent too often repels him without a second thought. The phenomena of the rise of the Copernican astronomy, modern geology, and modern biology, all bear out this generalization.

Nor is the charge of negativeness any more generally valid against such freethinking as directly assails current doctrines. There may be, of course, negative-minded people on that side as on the other; and such may fortuitously do something to promote freethought, or may damage it in their neighbourhood by their atmosphere. But everything goes to show that freethinking normally proceeds by way of intellectual construction—that is, by way of effort to harmonize one position with another; to modify a special dogma to the general run of one's thinking. Rationalism stands not for "skepticism" in the strict philosophic sense, but for a critical effort to reach certainties. The attitude of pure skepticism on a wide scale is really very rare—much rarer even than the philosophic effort. So far from freethinkers being given to "destroying without building up," they are, as a rule, unable to destroy a dogma either for themselves or for others without setting a constructive belief in its place—a form of explanation, that is; such being much more truly a process of construction than would be the imposition of a new scheme of dogma. In point of fact, they are often accused, and by the same critics, of an undue tendency to speculative construction; and the early atheists of Greece and of the modern period did so err. But that is only a proof the more that their freethinking was not a matter of arbitrary volition or an undue negativeness.

The only explanation which ostensibly countervails this is the old one above glanced at—that the unbeliever finds the given doctrine troublesome as a restraint, and so determines to reject it. It is to be feared that this view has survived Mr. A. S. Farrar. Yet it is



very clear that no man need throw aside any faith, and least of all Christianity, on the ground of its hampering his conduct. To say nothing of the fact that in every age, under every religion, at every stage of culture from that of the savage to that of the supersubtle decadent or mystic, men have practised every kind of misconduct without abandoning their supernatural credences—there is the special fact that the whole Christian system rests on the doctrine of forgiveness of sins to the believer. The theory of "wilful" disbelief on the part of the reprobate is thus entirely unpalatable. Such disbelief in the terms of the case would be uneasy, as involving an element of incertitude; and his fear of retribution could never be laid. On the other hand, he has but inwardly to avow himself a sinner and a believer, and he has the assurance that repentance at the last moment will outweigh all his sins.

It is not, of course, suggested that such is the normal or frequent course of believing Christians; but it has been so often enough to make the "libertine" theory of unbelief untenable. Indeed, the singular diversity between profession and practice among Christians has in all periods called out declarations by the more fervid believers that their average fellow-Christians are "practical atheists." More judicial minds may be set asking instead how far men really "believe" who do not act on their opinions. As one high authority has put it, in the Middle Ages the normal opposition of theory and practice "was peculiarly abrupt. Men's impulses were more violent, and their conduct more reckless, than is often witnessed in modern society; while the absence of a criticizing and measuring spirit made them surrender their minds more unreservedly than they would do now to a complete and imposing theory.....Resistance to God's Vicar might be, and indeed was admitted to be, a deadly sin, but it was one which nobody hesitated to commit."<sup>1</sup> And so with other sins, the sinner having somewhere in the rear of his consciousness the reflection that his sins could be absolved.

And, apart from such half-purposive forms of licence among Christians, there have been countless cases of purposive licence. In all ages there have been antinomian Christians,<sup>2</sup> whether of the sort that simply rest on the "seventy times seven" of the Gospel, or of the more articulately logical kind who dwell on the doctrine of faith *versus* works. For the rest, as the considerate theologian will

<sup>1</sup> Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed., p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> A religious basis for sexual licence is of course a common feature in non-Christian religions also. Classic instances are well known. As to sexual promiscuity in an "intensely religious" savage community, see Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1894, p. 290.

readily see, insistence on the possibility of a sinister motive for the unbeliever brings up the equal possibility of a sinister motive on the part of the convert to Christianity, ancient or modern. At every turn, then, the charge of perversity of the will recoils on the advocate of belief; so that it would be the course of common prudence to abandon it, even were it not in itself, as a rule, so plainly an expression of irritated bias.

On the other hand, it need not be disputed that unbelief has been often enough associated with some species of libertinism to give a passing colour for the pretence of causal connection. The fact, however, leads us to a less superficial explanation, worth keeping in view here. Freethinking being taken to be normally a "variation" of intellectual type in the direction of a critical demand for consistency and credibility in beliefs, its social *assertion* will be a matter on the one side of force of character or degree of recklessness, and on the other hand of force of circumstances. The intellectual potentiality and the propagandist purpose will be variously developed in different men and in different surroundings. If we ask ourselves how, in general, the critical tendency is to arise or to come into play, we are almost compelled to suppose a special stimulus as well as a special faculty. Critical doubt is made possible, broadly speaking, by the accumulation of ideas or habits of certain kinds which insensibly undo a previous state of homogeneity of thought. For instance, a community subsiding into peace and order from a state of warfare and plunder will at length find the ethic of its daily life at variance with the conserved ethic of its early religion of human sacrifice and special family or tribal sanctions; or a community which has accumulated a certain amount of accurate knowledge of astronomy will gradually find such knowledge irreconcilable with its primitive cosmology. A specially gifted person will anticipate the general movement of thought; but even for him some standing-ground must be supposed; and for the majority the advance in moral practice or scientific knowledge is the condition of any effective freethinking.

Between top and bottom, however, there are all grades of vivacity, earnestness, and courage; and on the side of the normal resistance there are all varieties of political and economic circumstance. It follows, then, that the *avowed* freethinker may be so in virtue either of special courage or of antecedent circumstances which make the attitude on his part less courageous. And it may even be granted to the quietist that the courage is at times that of ill-balanced judgment or heady temperament; just as it may be



conceded to the conservative that it is at times that which goes with or follows on disregard of wise ways of life. It is well that the full force of this position be realized at the outset. When we find, as we shall, some historic freethinkers displaying either extreme imprudence or personal indiscipline, we shall be prepared, in terms of this preliminary questioning, to realize anew that humanity has owed a great deal to some of its "unbalanced" types; and that, though discipline is nearly the last word of wisdom, indiscipline may at times be the morbid accompaniment or excess of a certain openness of view and spontaneity of action which are more favourable to moral and intellectual advance than a cold prudence or a safe insusceptibility.

But cold or calm prudence in turn is not a vice; and it is hardly possible to doubt that there have been in all ages varying numbers of unbelievers who shrugged their shoulders over the follies of faith, and declined to tilt against the windmills of fanaticism. There is much reason for surmising that Shakespeare was a case in point. It is not to be supposed, then, because some freethinkers who came out into the open were unbalanced types, that their psychology is *the* psychology of freethought, any more than that of General Gordon or Francis of Assisi is to be reckoned typical on the side of belief. There must have been myriads of quiet unbelievers, rational all round, whose unbelief was a strictly intellectual process, undisturbed by temperament. In our own day such types abound, and it is rather in them than in the abnormal types of past freethought—the Brunos and the Voltaires—that the average psychology of freethought is to be looked for and understood.

As for the case of the man who, already at odds with his fellows in the matter of his conduct, may in some phases of society feel it the easier to brave them in the matter of his avowed creed, we have already seen that even this does not convict him of intellectual dishonesty. And were such cases relatively as numerous as they are scarce—were the debauched deists even commoner than the vinous Steeles and Fieldings—the use of the fact as an argument would still be an oblique course on the side of a religion which claims to have found its first and readiest hearing among publicans and sinners. For the rest, the harm done in the world's history by unbalanced freethinkers is as dust in the balance against the immeasurable evil deliberately wrought on serious religious motives, to say nothing of the constant deviation of the mass of believers from their own professed code.

It may, finally, help a religious reader to a judicial view of the

phenomenon of freethought if he is reminded that every step forward in the alleged historic evolution of his own creed would depend, in the case put, on the existence of persons capable of rejecting a current and prevailing code in favour of one either denounced as impious or marked off by circumstances as dangerous. The Israelites in Egypt, the prophets and their supporters, the Gospel Jesus and his adherents, all ostensibly stand in some degree for positions of "negation," of hardy innovation, of disregard to things and persons popularly venerated; wherefore Collins, in the *Discourse* above mentioned, smilingly claimed at least the prophets as great freethinkers. On that head it may suffice to say that some of the temperamental qualifications would probably be very much the same for those who of old brought about religious innovation in terms of supernatural beliefs, and for those who in later times innovate by way of minimizing or repudiating such beliefs, though the intellectual qualifications might be different. Bruno and Dolet and Vanini and Voltaire, faulty men all four, could at least be more readily conceived as prophets in early Jewry, or reformers under Herod, than as Pharisees, or even Sadducees, under either regimen.

Be that as it may, however, the issues between freethought and creed are ultimately to be settled only in respect of their argumentative bases, as appreciable by men in society at any given time. It is with the notion of making the process of judicial appreciation a little easier, by historically exhibiting the varying conditions under which it has been undertaken in the past, that these pages are written.



## CHAPTER II

### PRIMITIVE FREETHINKING

To consider the normal aspects of primitive life, as we see them in savage communities and trace them in early literature, is to realize the enormous hindrance offered to critical thinking in the primary stages of culture by the mere force of habit. "The savage," says our leading anthropologist, "by no means goes through life with the intention of gathering more knowledge and framing better laws than his fathers. On the contrary, his tendency is to consider his ancestors as having handed down to him the perfection of wisdom, which it would be impiety to make the least alteration in. Hence among the lower races there is obstinate resistance to the most desirable reforms, and progress can only force its way with a slowness and difficulty which we of this century can hardly imagine."<sup>1</sup> Among the Bantu of South Africa, before the spread of European rule, "any person in advance of his fellows was specially liable to suspicion [of sorcery], so that progress of any kind towards what we should term higher civilization was made exceedingly difficult by this belief."<sup>2</sup> The real or would-be sorcerer could thus secure the elimination of the honest inventor; fear of sorcery being most potent as against the supposed irregular practitioner. The relative obstinacy of conservatism in periods and places of narrow knowledge is again illustrated in Lane's account of the modern Egyptians in the first half of the nineteenth century: "Some Egyptians who had studied for a few years in France declared to me that they could not instil any of the notions which they had there acquired even into the minds of their most intimate friends."<sup>3</sup> So in modern Japan there were many assassinations of reformers, and some civil war, before Western ideas could gain a footing.<sup>4</sup> The less the knowledge, in short, the harder to add to it.

<sup>1</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, 1881, p. 439. Cp. Lang, *Custom and Myth*, ed. 1893, p. 72; J. G. Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, 1905, pp. 85-87.

<sup>2</sup> Theal, *The Beginning of South African History*, 1902, p. 57. See also the Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, 1890, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. 1871, i, 280, note.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Mr. Yukichi Fukuzawa*, Tokyo, 1902, pp. 48-53, 56-69.

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It is hardly possible to estimate with any confidence the relative rates of progress; but, though all are extremely slow, it would seem that reason could sooner play correctively on errors of secular practice<sup>1</sup> than on any species of proposition in religion—taking that word to connote at once mythology, early cosmology, and ritual ethic. Mere disbelief in a particular medicine-man or rain-maker who failed would not lead to any reflective disbelief in all; any more than the beating or renunciation of his fetish by a savage or barbarian means rejection of his fetishism, or than the renunciation of a particular saint by a modern Catholic<sup>2</sup> means abandonment of prayer to saints for intercession.

The question as to whether savages *do* beat their idols is a matter in some dispute. Sir A. B. Ellis, a high authority, offers a notable denial to the current belief that negroes "beat their Gods if their prayers are unanswered." "After an experience of the Gold Coast extending over thirteen years," he writes, "I have never heard of, much less witnessed, anything of the kind, although I have made inquiries in every direction" (*The Tshi-speaking Peoples*, 1887, p. 194). Other anthropologists have collected many instances in other races—e.g., Fr. Schultze, *Der Fetischismus*, 1871, p. 130. In one case, a priest beats a fetish in advance, to secure his careful attention. (*Id.* pp. 90-91, citing the personal narrative of Bastian.) It seems to be a matter of psychic stage. The more primitive negro is as it were too religious, too much afraid of his Gods, who are not for him "idols," but spirits residing in images or objects. Where the state of fear is only chronic another temper may arise. Among the Bataks of Sumatra disappointed worshippers often scold a God; and their legends tell of men who declared war on a deity and shot at him from a mountain. (Warneck, *Die Religion des Batak*, 1909, p. 7. Cp. Gen. ii, 4-9.) A temper of defiance towards deity has been noted in an Aryan Kafir of the Hindu-Kush. (Sir G. S. Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*, 1899, p. 182.) Some peoples go much further. Among the Polynesians, when a God failed to cure a sick chief or notable, he "was regarded as inexorable, and was usually banished from the temple and his image destroyed" (W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 2nd ed. 1831, i, 350). So among the Chinese, "if the God does not give rain they will threaten and beat him; sometimes they publicly depose him from the rank

<sup>1</sup> See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. i, 71, as to savage conservatism in handicraft; but compare his *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 1865, p. 160, as to countervailing forces.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., in the first chapter of Saint-Simon's *Mémoires*, the account of the French soldiers who at the siege of Namur burned and broke the images of Saint Médard for sending so much rain. Cp. Irvine, *Letters on Sicily*, 1813, p. 72; and Ramage, *Wanderings through Italy*, ed. 1868, p. 113. Constant, *De la religion*, 1824, vol. i, ptie. ii, p. 34, gives a number of Christian instances.



of deity" (Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of Kingship*, 1905, pp. 98-101. Cp. Ross, *Pansebeia*, 4th ed., 1672, p. 80).

There are many analogous phenomena. In old Samoa, in the ritual of mourning for the dead, the family God was first implored to restore the deceased, and then fiercely abused and menaced.<sup>1</sup> See, too, the story of the people of Niuē or Savage Island in the South Pacific, who in the time of a great pestilence, thinking the sickness was caused by a certain idol, broke it in pieces and threw it away (Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1884, p. 306). See further the cases cited by Constant, *De la religion*, 1824, vol. i, ptie. ii, pp. 32-34; and by Peschel, *The Races of Man*, Eng. tr. 1876, pp. 247-8, in particular that of Rastus, the last pagan Lapp in Europe, who quarrelled with his fetish stone for killing his reindeer in revenge for the withholding of its customary offering of brandy, and "immediately embraced Christianity." (Compare E. Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula*, 1881, p. 276.) See again the testimony of Herman Melville in his *Typee*, ch. xxiv; and that of T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, ed. 1858, i, 236: "Sometimes the natives get angry with their deities, and abuse and even challenge them to fight." Herodotus has similar stories of barbarians who defy their own and other deities (iv, 172, 183, 184). Compare the case of King Rumi Bahadur of Nepaul, who cannonaded his Gods. Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, pp. 301-2. Also the anecdote cited by Spencer (*Id.* p. 160) from Sir R. Burton's *Goa*, p. 167. Here there is no disbelief, no reflection, but simple resentment. Compare, too, the amusing story of a blasphemy by Rossini, told by Louis Viardot, *Libre Examen*, 6e éd. pp. 166-67, note. That threats against the Gods are possible at a semi-civilized stage is proved by various passages in medieval literature. Thus in Caxton's *Charles the Grete*, a translation from an older French original, Charles is made to say: "O lord God, if ye suffre that Olyver be overcome and that my ryght at thys tyme be loste and defyled, I make a vowe that al Crystyante shal be destroyed. I shal not leve in Fraunce chirche ne monasterye, ymage ne aulter," etc. (Early Eng. Text Soc. rep. 1881, pp. 70-71.) Such language was probably used by not a few medieval kings in moments of fury; and there is even record that at the battle of Dunbar certain of the Scots Presbyterian clergy intimated to their deity that he would not be their God if he failed them on that day.

If such flights be reckoned possible for Christian kings and clerics in the Christian era, there would seem to be no unlikelihood about the many stories of God-beating and God-defying among contemporary savages, though so good an observer as Sir A. B. Ellis may not have witnessed them in the part of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, 1897, pp. 181-82.

Africa best known to him. The conclusion reached by Sir A. B. Ellis is that the negroes of the Gold Coast are not properly to be described as fetishists. Fetishism, on his view, is a worship of objects as in themselves endowed with magical power; whereas the Gold Coast negro ascribes no virtue to the object commonly called his fetish, regarding it simply as inhabited by a supernatural power. This writer sees "true fetishism" in the attitude of Italian peasants and fishermen who beat and ill-treat their images when prayers are not answered, and in that of Spaniards who cover the faces of their images or turn them to the wall when about to do anything which they think the saint or deity would disapprove of. On this view, fetishism is a later yet lower stage of religious evolution than that of the negro. On the other hand, Miss Kingsley takes fetishism to be the proper name of the attitude of the negro towards particular objects as divinely inhabited, and represents it as a kind of pantheism (*West African Studies*, 2nd ed. 1901, ch. v). And since, by her definition, "Gods of fetish" do not necessarily "require a material object to manifest themselves in" (p. 96), the term "fetish" is thus detached from all of its former meanings. It seems expedient, as a matter of terminology, to let fetishism mean both object- or image-worship and the belief in the special inhabiting of objects by deities, with a recognition that the beliefs may be different stages in an evolution, though, on the other hand, they are obviously likely to coalesce or concur. In the "Obeah" system of the negroes of the West Indies the former belief in the indwelling spirit has become, or has coalesced with, belief in the magical powers of the object (Keane, *Man, Past and Present*, 1900, p. 57).

As to defiance or contumely towards the Gods, finally, we have the testimony of the Swiss missionary Junod that the South African Thonga, whom he studied very closely, have in their ritual "a regular *insulting* of the Gods." (*Life of a South African Tribe*, ii, 1912, p. 384.) Why not? "Prayers to the ancestors.....are.....absolutely devoid of awe" (p. 385), though "the ancestor-Gods are certainly the most powerful spiritual agency acting on man's life" (p. 361); and "the spirits of the ancestors are the main objects of religious worship" (p. 344). The Thonga, again, use "neither idolatry nor fetishism," having no "idols" (p. 388), though they recognize "hidden virtues" in plants, animals, and stones (p. 345). They simply regard their ancestor-Gods very much as they do their aged people, whom they generally treat with little consideration. But the dead can do harm, and must therefore be propitiated—as savages propitiate, with fear or malice or derision in their hearts, as the case may be. (Cp. p. 379.) On the other hand, despite the denial of their "fetishism," they believe that ancestor-Gods may come in the shape of animals; and they so venerate



a kind of palladium (made up like a medicine-man's amulet) as to raise the question whether this kind of belief is not just that which Miss Kingsley called "fetish." (Junod, pp. 358, 373-74.)

Whatever may be the essence, or the varieties, of fetishism, it is clear that the beating of idols or threatening of Gods does not amount to rational doubt concerning the supernatural. Some general approach to that attitude may perhaps be inferred in the case of an economic revolt against the burdens of a highly specialized religious system, which may often have occurred in unwritten history. We shall note a recorded instance of the kind in connection with the question whether there are any savage tribes without religion. But it occurs in the somewhat highly evolved barbarism of pre-Christian Hawaii; and it can set up no inference as to any development of critical unbelief at lower levels. In the long stage of lower savagery, then, the only approach to freethinking that would seriously affect general belief would presumably be that very credulity which gave foothold to religious beliefs to begin with. That is to say, without anything in the nature of general criticism of any story or doctrine, one such might to some extent supersede another, in virtue of the relative gift of persuasion or personal weight of the propounders. Up to a certain point persons with a turn for myth or ritual-making would compete, and might even call in question each other's honesty, as well as each other's inspiration.

Since the rise of scientific hierology there has been a disposition among students to take for granted the good faith of all early religion-makers, and to dismiss entirely that assumption of fraud which was so long made by Christian writers concerning the greater part of every non-Christian system. The assumption had been passed on from the freethinkers of antiquity who formulated the view that all religious doctrine had been invented by politicians in order to control the people.<sup>1</sup> Christian polemicists, of course, applied it to all systems but their own. When, however, all systems are seen to be alike natural in origin, such charges are felt to recoil on the system which makes them; and latterly<sup>2</sup> Christian writers, seeing as much, have been fain to abandon the conception of "priest-

<sup>1</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathematicos*, ix, 14, 29; Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum*, i, 7; Lactantius, *De ira Dei*, x, 47; Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 42; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv, 32. It is noteworthy that the skeptic Sextus rejects the opinion as absurd, even as does the high-priest Cotta in Cicero.

<sup>2</sup> Vico was one of the first, after Sextus Empiricus and his modern commentator Fabricius, to insist (following the saying of Petronius, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*) that "False religions were founded not by the imposture of some, but by the credulity of all" (*Scienza Nuova* [1725], lib. i, prop. 40). Yet when denying (*id.*, *De Principiis*, ed. 1852, p. 114) the assertions of travellers as to tribes without religion, he insisted that they were mere fictions planned to sell the authors' books—here imputing fraud as lightly as others had done in the case of the supposed founders of religions.

craft," adroitly representing it as an extravagance of rationalism. It certainly served rationalistic purposes, and the title of the supposititious medieval work on "The Three Impostors" points to its currency among unbelievers long ago; but when we first find it popularly current in the seventeenth century, it is in a Christian atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> Some of the early deists and others have probably in turn exaggerated the amount of deliberate deceit involved in the formation of religious systems; but nevertheless "priestcraft" is a demonstrable factor in the process. What is called the psychology of religion has been much obscured in response to the demand of religious persons to have it so presented as to flatter them in that capacity.<sup>2</sup> Such a claim cannot be permitted to overrule the fair inductions of comparative science.

Anthropological evidence suggests that, while religion clearly begins in primordial fear and fancy, wilful fraud must to some extent have entered into all religious systems alike, even in the period of primeval credulity, were it only because the credulity was so great. One of the most judicial and sympathetic of the Christian scholars who have written the history of Greece treats as unquestionable the view that alike in pagan and Christian cults "priestcraft" has been "fertile in profitable devices, in the invention of legends, the fabrication of relics, and other modes of imposture";<sup>3</sup> and the leading hierologist of the last generation pronounces decisively as to an element of intentional deceit in the Koran-making of Mohammed<sup>4</sup>—a judgment which, if upheld, can hardly fail to be extended to some portions of all other sacred books. However that may be, we have positive evidence that wilful and systematic fraud enters into the doctrine of contemporary savages, and that among some "primitives" known myths are deliberately propounded to the boys and women by the male adults.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the majority of modern travellers among primitives seem to have regarded their priests and sorcerers in the mass as conscious deceivers.<sup>6</sup> If, then, we can point

<sup>1</sup> E.g., the Elizabethan play *Selimus* (Huth Lib. ed. of Greene, vol. xiv, ed. Grosart), dated 1594, vv. 258-262. (In "Temple Dramatists" ed., vv. 330-334.) See also below, vol. ii, ch. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> On the principle of self-expression in religion, cp. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen der Religion*, in *Werke*, ed. 1846-1849, i, 413, 445, 498, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Thirlwall, *History of Greece*, ed. 1839, i, 186, 204. Cp. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, 1858, i, 389.

<sup>4</sup> Tiele, *Outlines of the Hist. of Religions*, Eng. tr., p. 96. Cp. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., p. 141, note.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 1904, pp. 258, 347, 366, 373, 492.

<sup>6</sup> See the article by E. J. Glave, of Stanley's force, on "Fetichism in Congoland," in the *Century Magazine*, April, 1891, p. 836. Compare F. Schultze, *Der Fetichismus*, 1871, pp. 137, 141, 142, 144, etc.; Theal, *The Beginning of South African History*, 1902, pp. 49, 52; Kranz, *Natur- und Kulturleben der Zulus*, 1880, pp. 110, 113-14; Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 35th thous., pp. 69, 81-84; A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples*, 1887, pp. 125-29, 137-39.



to deliberate imposture alike in the charm-mongering and myth-mongering of contemporary savages and in the sacred-book-making of the higher historical systems, it seems reasonable to hold that conscious deceit, as distinguished from childlike fabrication, would chronically enter into the tale-making of primitive men, as into their simpler relations with each other. It is indeed impossible to conceive how a copious mythology could ever arise without the play of a kind of imaginativeness that is hardly compatible with veracity; and it is probably only the exigencies of ecclesiastical life that cause modern critics still to treat the most deliberate fabrications and forgeries in the Hebrew sacred books as somehow produced in a spirit of the deepest concern for truth. An all-round concern for truth is, in fact, a late intellectual development, the product of much criticism and much doubt; hence, perhaps, the lenity of the verdicts under notice. Certain wild tribes here and there, living in a state of great simplicity, are in our own day described as remarkably truthful;<sup>1</sup> but they are not remarkable for range of supernatural belief; and their truthfulness is to be regarded as a product of their special stability and simplicity of life. The trickery of a primitive medicine-man, of course, is a much more childlike thing than the frauds of educated priesthoods; and it is compatible with so much of spontaneous pietism as is implied in the common passing of the operator into the state of convulsion and trance—a transition which comes easily to many savages.<sup>2</sup> But even at that stage of psychosis, and in a community where simple secular lying is very rare, the professional wizard-priest becomes an adept in playing upon credulity.<sup>3</sup>

It belongs, in short, to the very nature of the priestly function, in its earlier forms, to develop in a special degree the normal bias of the undisciplined mind to *intellectual* fraud. Granting that there are all degrees of self-consciousness in the process, we are bound to recognize that in all of us there is "the sophist within," who stands between us and candour in every problem either of self-criticism or of self-defence. And, if the instructed man recognizes this clearly and the uninstructed does not, none the less is the latter an exemplification of the fact. His mental obliquities are not any less real because of his indifference to them than are the

142; Sir G. S. Robertson, *The Káfirs of the Hindu-Kush*, ed. 1899, pp. 405, 417; E. Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula*, 1881, p. 149; Turner, *Samoa*, 1884, p. 272. It is certain that the wizards of contemporary savage races are frequently killed as impostors by their own people. See below, p. 35.

<sup>1</sup> Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 406; *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., i, 38.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that this phenomenon occurs everywhere among primitives, from the South Seas to Lapland, should be noted in connection with the latterly revived claims of so-called "Mysticism."

<sup>3</sup> Cp. E. Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula*, 1881, pp. 149, 263.

acts of the hereditary thief because he does them without shame. And if we consider how the fetish-priest is at every turn tempted to invent and prevaricate, simply because his pretensions are fundamentally preposterous; and how in turn the priest of a higher grade, even when he sincerely "believes" in his deity, is bound to put forward as matters of knowledge or revelation the hypotheses he frames to account for either the acts or the abstentions of the God, we shall see that the priestly office is really as incompatible with a high sincerity in the primitive stages as in those in which it is held by men who consciously propound falsities, whether for their mere gain or in the hope of doing good. It may be true that the priestly claim of supernatural sanction for an ethical command is at times motivated by an intense conviction of the rightness of the course of conduct prescribed; but none the less is such a habit of mind fatal to intellectual sincerity. Either there is sheer hallucination or there is pious fraud.

Given, however, the tendency to deceit among primitive folk, distrust and detection in a certain number of cases would presumably follow, constituting a measure of simple skepticism. By force partly of this and partly of sheer instability of thought, early belief would be apt to subsist for ages like that of contemporary African tribes,<sup>1</sup> in a state of flux.<sup>2</sup> Comparative fixity would presumably arise with the approach to stability of life, of industry, and of political institutions, whether with or without a special priesthood. The usages of early family worship would seem to have been no less rigid than those of the tribal and public cults. For primitive man as for the moderns definite organization and ritual custom must have been a great establishing force as regards every phase of religious belief;<sup>3</sup> and it may well have been that there was thus less intellectual liberty of a kind in the long ages of what we regard as primitive civilization than in those of savagery and barbarism which preceded them. On that view, systems which are supposed to represent in the fullest degree the primeval spontaneity of religion may have been in part priestly reactions against habits of freedom accompanied by a certain amount of skepticism. A modern inquirer<sup>4</sup> has in some such sense advanced the theory that in ancient India, in even the earlier period of collection of the Rig-Veda, which itself

<sup>1</sup> Glave, article cited, pp. 835-36.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, 1889, p. 133; *Anthropological Religion*, 1892, p. 150; Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 2nd ed. ii, 358 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Bishop Butler's *Charge to the Clergy of Durham*, and Bishop Wordsworth *On Religious Restoration in England*, 1854, p. 75, etc.

<sup>4</sup> P. von Bradke, *Dyûs Asura, Ahura Mazda, und die Asuras*, Halle, 1885, p. 115.



undermined the monarchic character of the pre-Vedic religion, there was a decay of belief, which the final redaction served to accelerate. Such a theory can hardly pass beyond the stage of hypothesis in view of the entire absence of history proper in early Indian literature; but we seem at least to have the evidence of the Veda itself that while it was being collected there were deniers of the existence of its Gods.<sup>1</sup>

The latter testimony alone may serve as ground for raising afresh an old question which recent anthropology has somewhat inexactly decided—that, namely, as to whether there are any savages without religious beliefs.

[For old discussions on the subject see Cicero, *De natura deorum*, i, 23; Cumberland, *Disquisitio de legibus naturæ*, 1672, introd. (rejecting negative view as resting on inadequate testimony); Locke, *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Bk. I, ch. iii, § 9; ch. iv, § 8 (accepting negative view); protests against it by Vico (*Scienza Nuova*, 1725, as cited above, p. 26); by Shaftesbury (*Letters to a Student*, 1716, rep. in *Letters*, 1746, pp. 32–33); by Rev. John Milne, *An Account of Mr. Lock's Religion* (anon.), 1700, pp. 5–8; and by Sir W. Anstruther, *Essays Moral and Divine*, Edinburgh, 1701, p. 24; further protests by Lafitau (*Mœurs des sauvages américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps*, 1724, i, 5), following Boyle, to the effect that the very travellers and missionaries who denied all religion to savages avow facts which confute them; and general view by Fabricius, *Delectus argumentorum et Syllabus scriptorum*, Hamburgi, 1725, ch. viii. Cp. also Swift, *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, § 2.

Büchner (*Force and Matter*, ch. on "The Idea of God"); Lord Avebury = Sir John Lubbock (*Prehistoric Times*, 5th ed., pp. 574–80; *Origin of Civilization*, 5th ed., pp. 213–17); and Mr. Spencer (*Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583) have collected modern travellers' testimonies as to the absence of religious ideas in certain tribes. Cp. also J. A. St. John's (Bohn) ed. of Locke, notes on passages above cited, and on Bk. IV, ch. x, § 6. As Lord Avebury points out, the word "religion" is by some loosely or narrowly used to signify only a higher theology as distinct from lower supernaturalist beliefs.

<sup>1</sup> *Rig-Veda*, x, 121 (as translated by Muir, Müller, Dutt, and von Bradke); and x, 82 (Dutt's rendering). It is to be noted that the refrain "Who is the God whom we should worship?" is entirely different in Ludwig's rendering of x, 121. [Bertholet's *Religions-geschichtliches Lesebuch* (1908) compiled on the principle that "the best translations are good enough for us," follows the rendering of Muir, Müller, Dutt, and von Bradke (p. 165).] Cp. Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 302, and *Natural Religion*, pp. 227–229, citing R. V., viii, 100, 3, etc., for an apparently undisputed case of skepticism. See again Langlois's version of vi, 7, iii, 3 (p. 459). He cannot diverge much more from the German and English translators than they do from each other.

He himself, however, excludes from the field of "religion" a belief in evil spirits and in magic—here coinciding with the later anthropologists who represented magic and religion as fundamentally "opposed"—a view rejected even by some religionists. Cp. Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion* (1911), p. 116 sq.; Rev. E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, 1902, p. 3; Prof. T. Witten Davies, *Magic, Divination, and Demonology*, 1898, pp. 18–24. The proved erroneousness of many of the negative testimonies has been insisted on by Benjamin Constant (*De la Religion*, 1824, i, 3–4); Theodore Parker (*Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, 1842 and 1855, ed. 1877, p. 16); G. Roskoff (*Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*, 1880, Abschn. I and II); Dr. Tylor (*Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed., i, pp. 417–25); and Dr. Max Müller (*Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, p. 42 sq.; Hibbert Lectures, p. 91 sq.; *Natural Religion*, 1889, pp. 81–89; *Anthropological Religion*, 1892, pp. 428–35).

The Rev. H. A. Junod (*Life of a South African Tribe*, vol. ii, 1913, p. 346) shows how easily misconception on the subject may arise. Galton (*Narrative of an Explorer*, ch. viii, ed. 1891, p. 138) writes: "I have no conception to this day whether or no the Ovampo have any religion, for Click was frightened and angry if the subject of death was alluded to." The context shows that the native regarded all questions on religious matters with suspicion. Schweinfurth, again, contradicts himself twice within three pages as to the beliefs of the Bongo in a "Supreme Being" and in a future state; and thus leaves us doubting his statement that the neighbouring race, the Dyoor, "put no faith at all in any witchcraft" (*The Heart of Africa*, 3rd ed. i, 143–45). Much of the confusion turns on the fact that savages who practise no worship have religious beliefs (cp. Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, ed. 1878, p. 17, citing Monsignor Salvado; and Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, 1889, p. 284). The dispute, as it now stands, mainly turns on the definition of religion (cp. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. 1891, pp. 16–18, where Lubbock's position is partly misunderstood). Dr. Tylor, while deciding that no tribes known to us are religionless, leaves open the question of their existence in the past.

A notable example of the prolongation of error on this subject through orthodox assumptions is seen in Dr. A. W. Howitt's otherwise valuable work on *The Native Tribes of South Australia* (1904). Dr. Howitt produces (pp. 488–508) abundant evidence to show that a number of tribes believe in a "supernatural anthropomorphic being," variously named Nurrundere, Nurelli, Bunjil, Mungan-ngaua, Daramalun, and Baiame ("the same being under different names," writes Dr. Howitt, p. 499). This being he describes as "the tribal All-Father," "a venerable



kindly Headman of a tribe, full of knowledge and tribal wisdom, and all-powerful in magic, of which he is the source, with virtues, failings, and passions such as the aborigines regard them" (pp. 500-1). But he insists (p. 506) that "in this being, though supernatural, there is no trace of a divine nature," and, again, that "the Australian aborigines do not recognize any divinity, good or evil" (p. 756), though (p. 501) "it is most difficult for one of us to divest himself of the tendency to endow such a supernatural being [as the All-Father] with a nature quasi-divine, if not altogether so." Dr. Howitt does not name any European deity who satisfies him on the point of divinity! Obviously the Australian deities have evolved in exactly the same way as those of other peoples, Yahweh included. Dr. Howitt, indeed, admits (p. 507) that the Australian notions "may have been at the root of monotheistic beliefs." They certainly were; and when he adds that, "although it cannot be alleged that these aborigines have *consciously any form of religion*, it may be said that their beliefs are such that, under favourable conditions, they *might have* developed into an *actual religion*," he indicates afresh the confusion possible from unscientific definitions. The sole content of his thesis is, finally, that a "supernatural" being is not "divine" till the priests have somewhat trimmed him, and that a religion is not "actual" till it has been sacerdotally formulated. Dr. Howitt's negations are as untenable as Mr. Andrew Lang's magnification of the Australian All-Father into a perfect Supreme Being.

The really important part of Dr. Howitt's survey of the problem is his conclusion that the kind of belief he has described exists only in a specified area of Australia, and that this area is "the habitat of tribes.....where there has been the advance from group marriage to individual marriage, from descent in the female line to that in the male line" (p. 500). Messrs. Spencer and Gillen's denial of the existence of any belief in a personal deity among the tribes of Central Australia (*Northern Tribes*, 1904, p. 491) appears to stand for actual fact.

As to the "divinity" of the ancestor-gods of the primitives, see *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. p. 41 sq.]

The problem has been unduly narrowed to the question whether there are any whole tribes so developed. It is obviously pertinent to ask whether there may not be diversity of opinion within a given tribe. Such testimonies as those collected by Sir John Lubbock [Lord Avebury] and others, as to the existence of religionless savages, are held to be disposed of by further proof that tribes of savages who had been set down as religionless on the evidence of some of themselves had in reality a number of religious beliefs. Travellers' questions had been falsely answered, either on the

principle that non-initiates must not be told the mysteries, or from that sudden perception of the oddity of their beliefs which comes even to some civilized people when they try to state them to an unbelieving outsider. Questions, again, could easily be misunderstood, and answers likewise. We find, for instance, that savages who scout the idea that the dead can "rise again" do believe in the continued disembodied existence of all their dead, and even at times conceive of them as marrying and procreating! On the whole, they conceive of a continuity of spirit-life on earth in human shape. To speak of such people as having no idea of "a life beyond the grave" would obviously be misleading, though they have no notion of a judgment day or of future rewards or punishments.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, then, the negative view of savage religion had in a number of cases been hastily taken; but there remains the question, as a rule surprisingly ignored, whether some of the savages who disavowed all belief in things supernatural may not have been telling the simple truth about themselves, or even about their families and their comrades. As one sympathetic traveller notes of the Samoyedes: "There can be no such thing as strict accuracy of grammar or expression among an illiterate people; nor can there be among these simple creatures any consistent or fixed appreciation even of their own forms of.....belief.....Having no object in arriving at a common view of such matters, each Samoyede, if questioned separately, will give more or less his own disconnected impression of his faith."<sup>2</sup> And this holds of unfaith. A savage asked by a traveller, "Do you believe" so-and-so, might very well give a true negative answer for himself;<sup>3</sup> and the traveller's resulting misconception would be due to his own arbitrary assumption that all members of any tribe must think alike.

A good witness expressly testifies: "In the tribe [of Australians] with which I was best acquainted, while the blacks had a term for ghost and believed that there were departed spirits who were sometimes to be seen among the foliage, individual men would tell you upon inquiry that they believed that death was the last of them" (*Eaglehawk and Crow: A Study of the Australian Aborigines*, by John Mathew, M.A., B.D., 1899, p. 146). As to the risk of wrong negative inferences, on the other hand, see pp. 145, 147.

<sup>1</sup> Junod, as above cited, pp. 341, 343, 350, 388. Cp. Dalton, as cited, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> E. Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula*, 1881, pp. 146-7.

<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, there might be genuine defect of knowledge of the religion of others of the tribe. This is said to occur in thousands of cases in Christian countries: why not also among savages? See the express testimony of Sir G. S. Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*, ed. 1899, pp. 377, 409.



One of the best of our missionary witnesses, H. A. Junod, in his valuable study of the South African Thonga, testifies both to the commonness of individual variation in the way of religious fancy and the occurrence of sporadic unbelief, usually ended by fear. Individuals freely indulge in concrete speculations—e.g., as to the existence of animal souls—which do not win vogue (*Life of a South African Tribe*, vol. ii, 1913, p. 342 sq.), though the reporter seems to overlook the possibility that such ideas may be adopted by a tribe. Freethinking ideas have, of course, by far the least chance of currency. "The young folks of Libombo used to blaspheme in their hearts, saying, 'There are no Gods.' But," added the witness, "we very soon saw that there were some, when they killed one of us," who trod on a snake (work cited, pp. 354–55). That testimony illustrates well the difficulties of rational progress in a primitive community. But at times the process may be encouraged by the environment. The early missionary Ellis gives an instance of a community in Hawaii that had abandoned all religious practices: "We asked them who was their God. They said they had no God; formerly they had many: but now they had cast them all away. We asked them if they had done well in abolishing them. They said 'Yes,' for tabu had occasioned much labour and inconvenience, and drained off the best of their property. We asked them if it was a good thing to have no God.....They said perhaps it was; for they had nothing to provide for the great sacrifices, and were under no fear of punishment for breaking tabu; that now one fire cooked their food, and men and women ate together the same kind of provisions." (W. Ellis, *Tour Through Hawaii or Owhyhee*, 1827, p. 100.) The community in question had in their own way reached the Lucretian verdict, *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*.

Unless, again, such witnesses as Moffat be unfaithful reporters as well as mistaken in their inferences, some of the natives with whom they dealt were all but devoid of the ordinary religious notions<sup>1</sup> which in the case of other natives have enabled the missionaries to plant their doctrines. Nor is there anything hard of belief in the idea that, just as special religious movements spread credence in certain periods, a lack of active teachers in certain tribes may for a time have let previously common beliefs pass almost out of knowledge. If it be true that the Black Death wrought a great decline in the ecclesiastical life of England in the fourteenth century,<sup>2</sup> a long period of life-destroying conditions might eliminate from the life of a savage tribe all lore save that of primary self-preservation.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, end of ch. xvi and beginning of ch. xix.  
<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Gasquet, *The Great Pestilence*, 1893.

Moffat incidentally notes the significant fact that rain-makers in his time were usually foreigners to the tribes in which they operated.<sup>1</sup>

The explanation is partly that given by him later, that "a rain-maker seldom dies a natural death,"<sup>2</sup> most being executed as impostors for their failures. To this effect there are many testimonies.<sup>3</sup> Among the Bushmen, says Lichtenstein, when a magician "happens to have predicted falsely several times in succession, he is thrust out of the kraal, and very likely burned or put to death in some other way."<sup>4</sup> "A celebrated magician," says Burton again, "rarely if ever dies a natural death."<sup>5</sup> And it is told of the people of Niuë, or Savage Island, in the South Pacific, that "of old they had kings; but as they were the high priests as well, and were supposed to cause the food to grow, the people got angry with them in times of scarcity, and killed them; and as one after the other was killed, the end of it was that no one wished to be king."<sup>6</sup> So, in Uganda, if a chief and his medicine-men cannot make rain, "his whole existence is at stake in times of distress." One chief was actually driven out; and the rain-doctors always live on sufferance.<sup>7</sup> In such a state of things religion might well lose vogue.

Among some peoples of the Slave Coast, it appears, the regular priests, despite their power and prestige, are always under suspicion by reason of their frequent miscarriages; and they are—or were—not unfrequently put to death.<sup>8</sup> Here there is disbelief in the priest without disbelief in the God. But a disbelief in the priest which tended to exterminate him might well diminish religion.

On the other hand, a relative indifference to religion in a given tribe might result from the influence of one or more leading men who spontaneously doubted the religious doctrine offered to them, as many in Israel, on the face of the priestly records, disbelieved in the whole theocratic polity. In modern times preachers are constantly found charging "unbelief" on their own flocks, in respect not of any criticism of religious narrative or dogma, but of simple lack of ostensible faith in doctrines of prayer and Providence nominally

<sup>1</sup> *Missionary Labours*, ch. xix: stereo. ed. pp. 81, 82. It is noteworthy that the women were the first to avow unbelief in an unsuccessful rainmaker (*Id.* p. 84).

<sup>2</sup> *Missionary Labours*, as cited, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Schultze, *Der Fetischismus*, 1871, pp. 155–56; A. H. Keane, *Man, Past and Present*, 1900, p. 49; Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 1909, i, 86.

<sup>4</sup> *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1809–1806*, 1815, ii, 61. Cp. Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, 1890, p. 192, as to the compulsion on men of superior intelligence to play the wizard, by reason of the common connection of wizardry with any display of mental power. There is no more tragical aspect in the life-conditions of primitive peoples.

<sup>5</sup> *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, 1860, ii, 351.

<sup>6</sup> Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1884, pp. 304–305. Cp. Herodotus, iv, 68, as to the slaying of "false prophets" among the Scythians; and i, 128, as to the impaling of the Magi by Astyages.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Kollmann, *The Victoria Nyanza*, 1899, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, 1887, p. 127.



accepted.<sup>1</sup> Among peasants who have never seen a freethinking book or heard a professed freethinker's arguments may be heard expressions of spontaneous unfaith in current doctrines of Providence.

This is but a type of variations possible in primitive societies. Despite the social potency of primitive custom, variation may be surmised to occur in the mental as in the physical life at all stages; and what normally happens in savagery and low civilization appears to be a cancelment of the skeptical variation by the total circumstances—the strength of the general lead to supernaturalism, the plausibility of such beliefs to the average intelligence, and the impossibility of setting up skeptical institutions to oppose the others. In civilized ages skeptical movements are repeatedly seen to dwindle for simple lack of institutions; which, however, are spontaneously set up by and serve as sustainers of religious systems. On the simpler level of savagery, skeptical personalities would in the long run fail to affirm themselves as against the institutions of ordinary savage religion—the seasonal feasts, the ceremonies attending birth and death, the use of rituals, images, charms, sorcery, all tending to stimulate and conserve supernatural beliefs in general. Only the abnormally courageous would dare outspokenly to doubt or deny at all; and their daring would put them in special jeopardy.<sup>2</sup> The ancient maxim, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, is verified by all modern study of primitive life.<sup>3</sup> It is a recent traveller who gives the definition: "Fetishism is the result of the efforts of the savage intelligence seeking after a theory which will account for the apparent hostility of nature to man."<sup>4</sup> And this incalculable force of fear is constantly exploited by the religious bias from the earliest stages of sorcery.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g., an aged female relative of the writer, quite orthodox in all her habits, and devout to the extent of calling the Book of Esther "Godless" because the word "God" does not occur in it, yet at a pinch declared that she had "never heard of Providence putting a boll of meal inside anybody's door." Her daughter-in-law, also of quite religious habits, quoted the saying with a certain sense of its audacity, but endorsed it, as she had cause to do. Yet both regularly practised prayer and asserted divine beneficence.

<sup>2</sup> See B. Seeman, "Fiji and the Fijians," in Galton's *Vacation Tourists*, 1862, pp. 275-76, as to the terrorism resorted to by Fijian priests against unbelievers. "Punishment was sure to overtake the skeptic, let his station in life be what it might"—i.e., supernatural punishment was threatened, and the priests were not likely to let it fail. Cp. Basil Thomson, *The Fijians: A Study of the Decay of Custom*, 1909, introd., p. xi: "The reformers of primitive races never lived long: if they were low-born they were clubbed, and that was the end of them and their reforms; if they were chiefs, and something happened to them, either by disease or accident, men saw therein the figure of an offended deity; and obedience to the existing order of things became stronger than before." Cp. *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed., pp. 60-62, as to kings who wished to put down human sacrifices.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed., pp. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> E. J. Glave, art. cited, p. 825. Cp. Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 582, 594.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. the Rev. J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, 1890, pp. 222-23, as to the "universal suspicion" which falls upon tribesmen of rationalistic and anti-superstitious tendencies, making them "almost doubt their own sanity."

The check to intellectual evolution would here be on all fours with some of the checks inferribly at work in early moral evolution, where the types with the higher ideals would seem often to be positively endangered by their peculiarity, and would thus be the less likely to multiply. And what happened as between man and man would further tend to happen at times as between communities. Given the possible case of a tribe so well placed as to be unusually little affected by fear of enemies and the natural forces, the influence of rationalistic chiefs or of respected tribesmen might set up for a time a considerable anti-religious variation, involving at least a minimizing of religious doctrine and practices. Such a case is actually seen among the prosperous peoples of the Upper Congo, some of whom, like the poorer tribes known to Moffat, have no "medicine-men" of their own, and very vague notions of deity.<sup>1</sup> But when such a tribe did chance to come into conflict with others more religious, it would be peculiarly obnoxious to them; and, being in the terms of the case unwarlike, its chance of survival on the old lines would be small.

Such a possibility is suggested with some vividness by the familiar contrast between the modern communities of Fiji and Samoa—the former cruel, cannibalistic, and religious, the latter much less austere religious and much more humane. The ferocious Fijians "looked upon the Samoans with horror, because they had no religion, no belief in any such deities [as the Fijians'], nor any of the sanguinary rites which prevailed in other islands" (Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, pp. 293-94, following J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprise in the South Sea Islands*, ed. 1837, pp. 540-41; cp. the Rev. A. W. Murray, *Forty Years' Mission Work*, 1876, p. 171). The "no religion" is, of course, only relatively true. Mr. Lang has noticed the error of the phrase "the godless Samoans" (cp. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1884, pp. 16-17); but, while suggesting that the facts are the other way, he admits that in their creed "the religious sentiment has already become more or less self-conscious, and has begun to reason on its own practices" (*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, ii, 34; 2nd ed., ii, 58).

Taking the phenomena all along the line of evolution, we are led to the generalization that the rationalistic tendency, early or late, like the religious tendency, is a variation which prospers at different times in different degrees relatively to the favourableness of the environment. This view will be set forth in some detail in the course of our history.

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. H. Johnston, *The River Congo*, ed. 1895, p. 239. Cp. Moffat, as cited above.



It is not, finally, a mere surmise that individual savages and semi-savages in our own time vary towards disbelief in the supernaturalism of their fellows. To say nothing of the rational skepticism exhibited by the Zulu converts of Bishop Colenso, which was the means of opening his eyes to the incredibility of the Pentateuch,<sup>1</sup> or of the rationalism of the African chief who debated with Sir Samuel Baker the possibility of a future state,<sup>2</sup> we have the express missionary record that the forcible suppression of idolatry and tabu and the priesthood by King Rihoriho in the island of Hawaii, in 1819, was accomplished not only "before the arrival of any missionary," but on purely common-sense grounds, and with no thought of furthering Christianity, though he had heard of the substitution of Christianity for the native religion by Pomare in Tahiti. Rihoriho simply desired to save his wives and other women from the cruel pressure of the tabu system, and to divert the priests' revenues to secular purposes; and he actually had some strong priestly support.<sup>3</sup> Had not the missionary system soon followed, however, the old worship, which had been desperately defended in battle at the instigation of the conservative priests, would in all probability have grown up afresh, though perhaps with modifications. The savage and semi-savage social conditions, taken as a whole, are fatally unpropitious to rationalism.

A parallel case to that of Rihoriho is that of King Finow of the Tonga Islands, described by Mariner, who was his intimate. Finow was noted for his want of religion. "He used to say that the Gods would always favour that party in war in which there were the greatest chiefs and warriors"—the European *mot* strictly adapted to Fiji conditions. "He did not believe that the Gods paid much attention in *other* respects to the affairs of mankind; nor did he think that they could have any reason for doing so—no more than men could have any reason or interest in attending to the affairs of the Gods." For the rest, "it is certain that he disbelieved most of the oracles delivered by the priests," though he carefully used them for political and military purposes; and he acquiesced in the usage of human sacrifices—particularly on his own account—while professing to deplore the taste of the Gods in these matters. His own death seems to have been the result of poisoning by a priest, whom the king had planned to strangle. The king's daughter was sick, and the priest, instead of bringing about her recovery by his

<sup>1</sup> Colenso, *The Pentateuch*, vol. i, pref. p. vii; introd. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 1831, iv, 30-31, 126-28.

prayers, hardily explained that the illness was the act of the Gods in punishment of the king's frequent disrespect to them. Daughter and father were alternately ill, till the former died; and then it was that the king, by disclosing his resolve to strangle the priest, brought on his own death (1810). A few warriors were disposed to take revenge on the priest; but the majority, on learning the facts, shuddered at the impious design of the late king, and regarded his death as the natural vengeance of the Gods. But, though such "impiety" as his was very rare, his son after him decided to abolish the priestly office of "divine chieftain," on the score that it was seen to avail for nothing, while it cost a good deal; and the chiefs and common people were soon brought to acquiesce in the policy.<sup>1</sup>

Such cases appear to occur in many barbarous communities. It is recorded of the Kaffir chief Go that he was perfectly aware of the hollowness of the pretensions of the magicians and rain-makers of his tribe, though he held it impolitic to break with them, and called them in and followed their prescriptions, as did his subjects.<sup>2</sup> Of the Galeka chief Segidi it is similarly told that, while his medicine-men went into trances for occult knowledge preparatory to a military expedition, he carefully obtained real information through spies, and, while liberally rewarding his wizards, sent his sons to school at Blythswood.<sup>3</sup> Yet again, in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, we have the story of King Edwin's priest, Coifi, naïvely avowing that he saw no virtue in his religion,<sup>4</sup> inasmuch as many men received more royal favours than he, who had been most diligent in serving the Gods.<sup>5</sup> Such a declaration might very well have been arranged for by the Christian Bishop Paulinus, who was converting the king, and would naturally provide for Coifi; but on any view a process of skepticism had taken place in the barbarian's mind.<sup>6</sup>

Other illustrations come from the history of ancient Scandinavia. Grimm notes in several Norse sagas and songs expressions of contempt for various Gods, which appear to be independent of

<sup>1</sup> *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, compiled from the communications of W. Mariner, by John Martin, M.D., 3rd ed. 1827, i, 289-300, 306-307, 338-39; ii, 27-28, 83-86, 134. Mariner, who saw much of the priests, found no reason to suspect them of any systematic deception. See ii, 129. But his narrative leaves small room for doubt as to the procedure of the priest of Toobo Totai.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. A. Kropf, *Das Volk der Xosa-Kaffern in östlichen Südafrika*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 203-204. Dr. Kropf, a missionary of forty years' experience, states that many of the Kaffirs latterly disbelieve in their sorcerers; but this may be partly a result of missionary teaching—not so much the religious as the scientific. See the testimony of the Rev. J. Macdonald, *Life in Africa*, 1890, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. J. Macdonald, *Life in Africa*, pp. 225-26.

<sup>4</sup> It is clear that in the Christianization of Europe much use was made of the argument that the best lands had fallen to the Christian peoples. See the epistle of Bishop Daniel of Winchester to St. Boniface (*Ep. lxvii*) cited in Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. of Murdock's translation, p. 262.

<sup>5</sup> Bede, *Eccles. Hist.*, ii, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. A. H. Mann in *Social England*, illustr. ed, i, 217.



Christian influence;<sup>1</sup> and many warriors continued alike the Christian and the Pagan deities. In the saga of King Olaf Tryggvason, who enforced Christianity on Norway, it is declared by one chief that he relied much more on his own arm than on Thor and Odin; while another announced that he was neither Christian nor Pagan, adding: "My companions and I have no other religion than the confidence of our own strength and in the good success which always attends us in war." Similar sentiments are recorded to have been uttered by Rolf Krake, a legendary king of Denmark (*circa* 500);<sup>2</sup> and we have in the *Æneid* the classic type—doubtless drawn from barbaric life—of Mezentius, *divum contemptor*, who calls his right arm his God, and in dying declares that he appeals to no deity.<sup>3</sup> Such utterances, indeed, do not amount to rational freethinking; but, where some could be thus capable of anti-theism, it is reasonable to surmise that among the more reflective there were some capable of simple atheism or non-belief, and of the prudence of keeping the fact to themselves. Partial skepticism, of course, would be much more common, as among the Aryan Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush, with whom, before their conquest by the Ameer of Afghanistan, a British agent found among the younger men an inclination to be skeptical about some sacred ceremonies, while very sincere in their worship of their favourite deity, the God of war.<sup>4</sup>

It is thus seen to be inaccurate to say, as has been said by an accomplished antagonist of apriorism, that "under the yoke of tribal custom skepticism can hardly arise: there is no place for the half-hearted: as all men feel alike, so all think alike: skepticism arises when beliefs are put into formal propositions."<sup>5</sup> It is broadly true that "there is no place for" the doubter as such in the tribal society; but doubters do exist. Skepticism—in the sense in which the term is here used, that of rational disbelief—may even be commoner in some stages of the life of tribal customs than in some stages of backward civilization loaded with formulated creeds. What is true is that in the primitive life the rationalism necessarily fails, for lack of culture and institutions, to diffuse and

<sup>1</sup> *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. trans. 1882, i, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Crichton and Wheaton, *Scandinavia*, 1837, i, 198, note. Compare Dr. Ph. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Skandinavischen Litteratur*, i, 25: "In the higher circles [in the pagan period] from an early date (*schon lange*) unbelief and even contempt of religion flourished ..... probably never reaching the lower grades of the people." See also C. F. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, French trans., Copenhagen, 1878, i, 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Æneid*, vii, 648; x, 773, 890. Mezentius does not deny that Gods exist: see x, 743.

<sup>4</sup> Sir G. S. Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*, ed. 1899, p. 379.

<sup>5</sup> Professor T. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, p. 82.

establish itself, whereas superstition succeeds, being naturally institution-making. Under such conditions skepticism is but a recurrent variation.<sup>1</sup>

It is significant, further, that in the foregoing cases of unbelief at the lower levels of civilization it is only the high rank of the doubter that secures publication for the fact of the doubt. In Hawaii, or Tonga, only a king's unbelief could make itself historically heard. So in the familiar story of the doubting Inca of Peru, who in public religious assembly is said to have avowed his conclusion that the deified Sun was not really a living thing, it is the status of the speaker that gives his words a record. The doubt had in all likelihood been long current among the wise men of Peru; it is indeed ascribed to two or three different Incas;<sup>2</sup> but, save for the Incas' promulgation of it, history would bear no trace of Peruvian skepticism. So again in the Acolhuan State of Tezcucó, the most civilized in the New World before the Spanish conquest, the great King Netzahualcoyotl is found opposing the cults of human sacrifice and worshipping an "unknown God," without an image and with only incense for offering.<sup>3</sup> Only the king in such an environment could put on record such a conception. There is, in fact, reason to believe that all ancient ameliorations of bloody rites were the work of humane kings or chiefs,<sup>4</sup> as they are known to have been among semi-savages in our own day.<sup>5</sup> In bare justice we are bound to surmise that similar developments of rationalism have been fairly frequent in unwritten history, and that there must have been much of it among the common folk; though, on the other hand, the very position of a savage king, and the special energy of character which usually goes to secure it, may count for much in giving him the courage to think in defiance of custom. In modern as in early Christian times, it is always to the chief or king of a savage or barbarous tribe that the missionary looks for permission to proceed against the force of popular conservatism.<sup>6</sup> Apart from kings and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Basil Thomson, in the able introduction to his excellent work on *The Fijians*, speaks of primitive reformers (p. xi) as "rare souls born before their time." But there is no special "time" for reformers, who, as such, must be in advance of their average contemporaries.

<sup>2</sup> Garcilasso, i, viii, c. 8; i, ix, c. 10; Herrera, Dec. v, l. iv, c. 4. See the passages in Réville's Hibbert Lectures, pp. 162-65.

<sup>3</sup> Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed., pp. 81 sq., 91-93, 97; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, v, 427-29; Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, Eng. tr. ed. 1807, B. iv, §§ 4, 15; vii, § 42.

<sup>4</sup> See the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 60-62, 361. Cp. Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan*, 1904, pp. 313-14.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, ed. 1870, i, 231; Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1884, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> "A long time elapses between each step that their [missionaries'] stations advance: and when they do it invariably is under the influence of some chief that they are even then led on." Dalton, *Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa*, ed. 1891, p. 102.



chiefs, the priesthood itself would be the likeliest soil for skepticism, though, of course, not for the open avowal of it.

There are to be noted, finally, the facts collected as to marked skeptical variation among children;<sup>1</sup> and the express evidence that "it has not been found in a single instance that an uneducated deaf-mute has had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe."<sup>2</sup> These latter phenomena do not, of course, entitle us to accept Professor Gruppe's sweeping theorem that it is the religious variation that is abnormal, and that religion can have spread only by way of the hereditary imposition of the original insanity of one or two on the imagination of the many.<sup>3</sup> Deaf-mutes are not normal organisms. But all the facts together entitle us to decide that religion, broadly speaking, is but the variation that has chiefly flourished, by reason of its adaptation to the prevailing environment thus far; and to reject as unscientific the formulas which, even in the face of the rapidly-spreading rationalism of the more civilized nations, still affirm supernaturalist beliefs to be a universal necessity of the human mind.

On the same grounds, we must reject the claim—arbitrarily set up by one historian in the very act of showing how religion historically oppugns science—that all sacred books as such "are true because they have been developed in accordance with the laws governing the evolution of truth in human history; and because in poem, chronicle, code, legend, myth, apologue, or parable, they reflect this development of what is best in the onward march of humanity."<sup>4</sup> In this proposition the opening words, "are true because," are strictly meaningless. All literature whatever has been developed under the same general laws. But if it be meant that sacred books were specially likely to garner truth as such, the claim must be negated. In terms of the whole demonstration of the bias of theology against new truth in modern times, the irresistible presumption is that in earlier times also the theological and theocratic spirit was in general hostile to every process by which truth is

<sup>1</sup> See Professor Sully's *Studies of Childhood*, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. S. Smith, *Church Work among the Deaf and Dumb*, 1875, cited by Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583. Cp. the testimony cited there from Dr. Kitto, *Lost Senses*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, pp. 263, 276, 277, etc. What is true as regards the thesis is that some of the central insanities of religion, such as the cult of human sacrifice, seem to have been propagated in all directions from an Asiatic centre. See the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 273, 292, 343, 354, 362, etc. Cp. the Rev. D. Macdonald's *Asiatic Origin of the Oceanic Languages*, Luzac & Co., 1894; the *Nubische Grammatik* of Lepsius, 1880; and Terrien de Lacouperie, *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilization*, 1894, pp. 134, 362-63.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Andrew White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 1896, i, 23.

normally attained. And if the thesis be limited to moral truth, it is still less credible. It is, in fact, inconceivable that literature so near the popular level as to suit whole priesthoods should be morally the best of which even the age producing it is capable; and nothing is more certain than that enlightened ethic has always had to impeach or explain away the barbarisms of some sacred books. The true summary is that in all cases the accepted sacred books have of necessity fallen short not only of scientific truth and of pure ethic, but even of the best speculation and the best ethic of the time of their acceptance, inasmuch as they excluded the criticism of the freethinking few on the sacred books themselves. There is sociological as well as physical science, and the former is flouted when the whole freethinking of the human race in the period of Bible-making is either ignored or treated as worthless.

It is probable, for instance, that in all stages of primitive religion there have been disbelievers in the value of sacrifice, who might or might not dare to denounce the practice. The demurrers to it in the Hebrew prophetic literature are probably late; but they were in all likelihood anticipated in early times. Among the Fijians, for whom cannibalism was an essentially religious act, and the privilege of the males of the aristocracy, there were a number of the latter who, before and apart from the entrance of Christianity, abominated and denounced the practice, reasoning against it also on utilitarian grounds, while the orthodox made it out to be a social duty. There were even whole towns which revolted against it and made it *tabu*; and it was by force mainly of this rationalistic reaction that the missionaries succeeded so readily in putting down the usage.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to estimate how often in the past such a revolt of reason against religious insanity has been overborne by the forces of pious habit.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. B. Seeman, *Viti*, 1862, pp. 179-82.



### CHAPTER III

#### PROGRESS UNDER ANCIENT RELIGIONS

##### § 1. *Early Association and Competition of Cults*

WHEN religion has entered on the stage of quasi-civilized organization, with fixed legends or documents, temples, and the rudiments of hierarchies, the increased forces of terrorism and conservatism are in nearly all cases seen to be in part countervailed by the simple interaction of the systems of different communities. There is no more ubiquitous force in the whole history of the subject, operating as it does in ancient Assyria, in the life of Vedic India and Confucian China, and in the diverse histories of progressive Greece and relatively stationary Egypt, down through the Christian Middle Ages to our own period of comparative studies.

In ages when any dispassionate comparative study was impossible, religious systems appear to have been considerably modified by the influence of those of conquered peoples on those of their conquerors, and *vice versa*. Peoples who while at arm's length would insult and affect to despise each other's Gods, and would deride each other's myths,<sup>1</sup> appear frequently to have altered their attitude when one had conquered the other; and this not because of any special growth of sympathy, but by force of the old motive of fear. In the stage of natural polytheism no nation really doubted the existence of the Gods of another; at most, like the Hebrews of the early historic period, it would set its own God above the others, calling him "Lord of Lords." But, every community having its own God, he remained a local power even when his own worshippers were conquered, and his cult and lore were respected accordingly. This procedure, which has been sometimes attributed to the Romans in particular as a stroke of political sagacity, was the normal and natural course of polytheism. Thus in the Hebrew books the Assyrian conqueror is represented as admitting that it is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lang (*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i, 91) as to the contemptuous disbelief of savages in Christian myths. Mr. Lang observes that this shows savages and civilized men to have "different standards of credulity." That, however, does not seem to be the true inference. Each order of believer accepts the myths of his own creed, and derides others.

#### EARLY ASSOCIATION AND COMPETITION OF CULTS 45

necessary to leave a priest who knows "the manner of the God of the land" among the new inhabitants he has planted there.

See 2 Kings xvii, 26. Cp. Ruth i, 16, and Judges xvii, 13. The account by Herodotos (ii, 171) of the preservation of the Pelasgic rites of Dēmêtêr by the women of Arcadia points to the same principle. See also hereinafter, ch. vi, § 1; K. O. Müller, *Introd. to a Sci. Study of Mythol.*, Eng. trans., p. 193; Adolf Bastian, *Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, 1860, i, 189; Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, 2nd ed., p. 69; Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 164; Gibbon, ch. xxxiv—Bohn ed., iii, 554, note; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i, 113-15; and Dr. F. B. Jevons's *Introd. to the Hist. of Relig.*, 1896, pp. 36-40, where the fear felt by conquering races for the occult powers of the conquered is limited to the sphere of "magic." But when Dr. Jevons so defines magic as to admit of his proposition (p. 38) that "the hostility from the beginning between religion and magic is universally admitted," he throws into confusion the whole phenomena of the early official-religious practice of magic, of which sacrifice and prayer are the type-forms that have best survived. And in the end he upsets his definition by noting (p. 40) how magic, "even where its relation to religion is one of avowed hostility," will imitate religion. Obviously magic is a function or aspect or element of primitive religion (cp. Roskoff, *Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*, 1880, p. 144; Sayce, pp. 315, 319, 327, and *passim*; and Tiele, *Egyptian Rel.*, pp. 22, 32); and any "hostility," far from being universal, is either a social or a philosophical differentiation. On the whole question compare the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed., pp. 11-38. In the opinion of Weber (*Hist. of Ind. Lit.*, p. 264) the magic arts "found a more and more fruitful soil as the religious development of the Hindus progressed"; "so that they now, in fact, reign almost supreme." See again Dr. Jevons's own later admission, p. 395, where the exception of Christianity is somewhat arbitrary. On this compare Kant, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, B. iv, Th. ii, § 3.

Similar cases have been noted in primitive cults still surviving. Fear of the magic powers of "lower" or conquered races is in fact normal wherever belief in wizardry survives; and to the general tendency may be conjecturally ascribed such phenomena as that of the Saturnalia, in which masters and slaves changed places, and the institution of the Levites among the Hebrews, otherwise only mythically explained. But if conquerors and conquered thus tended to amalgamate or associate their cults, equally would allied tribes tend to do so; and, when particular Gods of different groups were seen to correspond in respect of special attributes, a further analysis



would be encouraged. Hence, with every extension of every State, every advance in intercourse made in peace or through war, there would be a further comparison of credences, a further challenge to the reasoning powers of thoughtful men.

On the normal tendency to defer to local deities, compare Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, as last cited; B. Thomson, *The Fijians*, 1908, p. 112; A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, 1887, p. 147, and *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples*, 1890, p. 55; P. Wurm, *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 2te Aufl., p. 43 (as to Madagascar); Sir H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1902, ii, 589; Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iii, 186; P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, ed. 1908, p. 191; W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 56, 84; Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 1909, i, 86-87, 94, 100; iii, 188; iv, 170; v, 467-68; W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas*, 1906, p. 263; Rae, *The White Sea Peninsula*, 1881, p. 262; Élie Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 254-56; Grant Allen, *Evolution of the Idea of God*, 1897, pp. 289, 301-302; Castrén, *Vorlesungen über die Finnische Mythologie*, 1853, p. 281; Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, 1892, p. 140, citing Weinhold, *Deutsche Frauen*, i, 105; Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e éd. p. 67; E. Higgins, *Hebrew Idolatry and Superstition*, 1893, pp. 20, 24; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1889, p. 77; Wellhausen, *Heidenthum*, pp. 129, 183, cited by Smith, p. 79; Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 65; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. ii, 72. Above all, see the record in *Old New Zealand*, "by a Pakeha Maori" (2nd ed. Auckland, 1863, p. 154), of the believing resort of some white men to native wizards in New Zealand.

Stevenson, again, is evidently proceeding upon observation when he makes his trader in *The Beach of Falesà* say: "We laugh at the natives and their superstitions; but see how many traders take them up, splendidly educated white men that have been bookkeepers (some of them) and clerks in the old country" (*Island Nights' Entertainments*, 1893, pp. 104-105). In Abyssinia, "Galla sorceresses are frequently called in by the Christians of Shoa to transfer sickness or to rid the house of evil spirits" (Major W. Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia*, 1844, iii, 50). On the other hand, some Sudanese tribes "believe in the virtue both of Christian and Moslem amulets, but have hitherto lent a deaf ear to the preachers of both these religions" (A. H. Keane, *Man, Past and Present*, 1900, p. 50).

This tendency did not exclude, but would in certain cases conflict with, the strong primitive tendency to associate every God permanently with his supposed original locality. Tiele writes (*Hist. of the Egypt. Relig.*, Eng. trans. introd. p. xvii)

that in no case was a place given to the Gods of one nation in another's pantheon "if they did not wholly alter their form, character, appearance, and not seldom their very name." This seems an over-statement, and is inconsistent with Tiele's own statement (*Hist. comparée des anc. relig. égyptiennes et sémitiques*, French trans., 1882, pp. 174-80) as to the adoption of Sumerian and Akkadian Gods and creeds by the Semites. What is clear is that local cults resisted the removal of their Gods' images; and the attempt to deport such images to Babylon, thus affecting the monopoly of the God of Babylon himself, was a main cause of the fall of Nabonidos, who was driven out by Cyrus. (E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i (1884), 599.) But the Assyrians invoked Bel Merodach of Babylon, after they had conquered Babylon, in terms of his own ritual; even as Israelites often invoked the Gods of Canaan (cp. Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, *Relig. of the Anc. Babylonians*, p. 123). And King Mardouk-nadinakhe of Babylon, in the twelfth century B.C., carried off statues of the Assyrian Gods from the town of Hekali to Babylon, where they were kept captive for 418 years (Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, 4e éd. p. 300). A God could migrate with his worshippers from city to city (Meyer, iii, 169; Sayce, p. 124); and the Assyrian scribe class maintained the worship of their special God Nebo wherever they went, though he was a local God to start with (Sayce, pp. 117, 119, 121). And as to the recognition of the Gods of different Egyptian cities by politic kings, see Tiele's own statement, p. 36. Cp. his *Outlines*, pp. 73, 84, 207.

A concrete knowledge of the multiplicity of cults, then, was obtruded on the leisured and travelled men of the early empires and of such a civilization as that of Hellas;<sup>1</sup> and when to such knowledge there was added a scientific astronomy (the earliest to be constituted of the concrete sciences), a revision of beliefs by such men was inevitable.<sup>2</sup> It might take the form either of a guarded skepticism or of a monarchic theology, answering to the organization of the actual earthly empire; and the latter view, in the nature of the case, would much the more easily gain ground. The freethought of early civilization, then, would be practically limited for a long time to movements in the direction of co-ordinating polytheism, to the end of setting up a supreme though not a sole deity; the chief

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Decharme, *La Critique des trad. relig. chez les Grecs*, 1904, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> The same process will be recorded later in the case of the intercourse of Crusaders and Saracens; and in the seventeenth century it is noted by La Bruyère (*Caractères*, ch. xvi, *Des esprits forts*, par. 3) as occurring in his day. The anonymous English author of an essay on *The Agreement of the Customs of the East Indians with those of the Jews* (1705, pp. 152-53) naïvely endorses La Bruyère. Macaulay's remark to the Edinburgh electors, on the view taken of sectarian strifes by a man who in India had seen the worship of the cow, is well known.



God in any given case being apt to be the God specially affected by the reigning monarch. Allocation of spheres of influence to the principal deities would be the working minimum of plausible adjustment, since only in some such way could the established principle of the regularity of the heavens be formally accommodated to the current worship; and wherever there was monarchy, even if the monarch were polytheistic, there was a lead to gradation among the Gods.<sup>1</sup> A pantheistic conception would be the highest stretch of rationalism that could have any vogue even among the educated class. All the while every advance was liable to the ill-fortune of overthrow or arrest at the hands of an invading barbarism, which even in adopting the system of an established priesthood would be more likely to stiffen than to develop it. Early rationalism, in short, would share in the fluctuations of early civilization; and achievements of thought would repeatedly be swept away, even as were the achievements of the constructive arts.

### § 2. *The Process in India*

The process thus deducible from the main conditions is found actually happening in more than one of the ancient cultures, as their history is now sketched. In the Rig-Veda, which if not the oldest is the least altered of the Eastern Sacred Books, the main line of change is obvious enough. It remains so far matter of conjecture to what extent the early Vedic cults contain matter adopted from non-Aryan Asiatic peoples; but no other hypothesis seems to account for the special development of the cult of Agni in India as compared with the content and development of the other early Aryan systems, in which, though there are developments of fire worship, the God Agni does not appear.<sup>2</sup> The specially priestly character of the Agni worship, and the precedence it takes in the Vedas over the solar cult of Mitra, which among the kindred Aryans of Iran receives in turn a special development, suggest some such grafting, though the relations between Aryans and the Hindu aborigines, as indicated in the Veda, seem to exclude the possibility of their adopting the fire-cult from the conquered

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 96, 121-22; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 74; Tiele, *Egyptian Religion*, p. 36; and *Outlines*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 109-110, and Fischer, *Heidenthum und Offenbarung*, p. 59. Professor Max Müller's insistence that the lines of Vedic religion could not have been "crossed by trains of thought which started from China, from Babylon, or from Egypt" (*Physical Religion*, p. 251), does not affect the hypothesis put above. The Professor admits (p. 250) the exact likeness of the Babylonian fire-cult to that of Agni.

inhabitants,<sup>3</sup> who, besides, are often spoken of in the Vedas as "non-sacrificers,"<sup>4</sup> and at times as "without Gods."<sup>5</sup> But this is sometimes asserted even of hostile Aryans.<sup>6</sup> In any case the carrying on of the two main cults of Agni and Indra side by side points to an original and marked heterogeneity of racial elements; while the varying combination with them of the worship of other deities, the old Aryan Varuna, the three forms of the Sun-God Aditya, the Goddess Aditi and the eight Adityas, the solar Mitra, Vishnu, Rudra, and the Maruts, imply the adaptation of further varieties of hereditary creed. The outcome is a sufficiently chaotic medley, in which the attributes and status of the various Gods are reducible to no code,<sup>7</sup> the same feats being assigned to several, and the attributes of all claimed for almost any one. Here, then, were the conditions provocative of doubt among the critical; and while it is only in the later books of the Rig-Veda that such doubt finds priestly expression, it must be inferred that it was current in some degree among laymen before the hymn-makers avowed that they shared it. The God Soma, the personification of wine, identified with the Moon-God Chandra,<sup>8</sup> "hurls the irreligious into the abyss."<sup>9</sup> This may mean that his cult, like that of his congener Dionysos in Greece, was at first forcibly resisted, and forcibly triumphed. At an earlier period doubt is directed against the most popular God, Indra, perhaps on behalf of a rival cult.<sup>10</sup> Later it seems to take the shape of a half-skeptical, half-mystical questioning as to which, if any, God is real.

From the Catholic standpoint, Dr. E. L. Fischer has argued that "Varuna is in the ontological, physical, and ethical relation the highest, indeed the unique, God of ancient India"; and that the Nature-Gods of the Veda can belong only to a later period in the religious consciousness (*Heidenthum und Offenbarung*, 1878, pp. 36-37). Such a development, had it really occurred, might be said to represent a movement of primitive freethought from an unsatisfying monotheism to a polytheism that seemed better to explain natural facts. A more plausible view of the process, however, is that of von Bradke, to the effect that "the

<sup>3</sup> But cp. Müller, *Anthropolog. Relig.*, p. 164, as to possible later developments; and see above, pp. 45-47, as to the many cases in which conquering races have actually adopted the Gods of the conquered.

<sup>4</sup> Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, ii (2nd ed.), 372, 379, 384.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 395.

<sup>6</sup> Max Müller, *Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 207-208.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 1894, pp. 94, 98-99; Ghosh, *Hist. of Hindu Civ. as illust. in the Vedas*, Calcutta, 1889, pp. 190-91; Max Müller, *Phys. Relig.*, 1891, pp. 197-98.

<sup>8</sup> Max Müller, *Selected Essays*, ii, 237.

<sup>9</sup> Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v, 268.

<sup>10</sup> Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 302, citing R. V., viii, 100, 3; and ii, 12, 5. The first passage runs: "If you wish for strength, offer to Indra a hymn of praise: a true hymn, if Indra truly exist; for some one says, Indra does not exist! Who has seen him? Whom shall we praise." The hymn of course asseverates his existence.



old Indo-Germanic polytheism, with its pronounced monarchic apex, which.....constituted the religion of the pre-Vedic [Aryan] Hindus, lost its monarchic apex shortly before and during the Rig-Veda period, and set up for itself the so-called Henotheism [worship of deities severally as if each were the only one], which thus represented in India a time of religious decline; a decline that, at the end of the period to which the Rig-Veda hymns belong, led to an almost complete dissolution of the old beliefs. The earlier collection of the hymns must have promoted the decline; and the final redaction must have completed it. The collected hymns show only too plainly how the very deity before whom in one song all the remaining Gods bow themselves, in the next sinks almost in the dust before another. Then there sounds from the Rig-Veda (x, 121) the wistful question: Who is the God whom we should worship?" (*Dyāus Asura, Ahuramazda, und die Asuras*, Halle, 1885, p. 115; cp. note, *supra*, p. 30). On this view the growth of monotheism went on alongside of a growth of critical unbelief, but, instead of expressing that, provoked it by way of reaction. Dr. Muir more specifically argues (*Sanskrit Texts*, v, 116) that in the Vedic hymns Varuna is a God in a state of decadence; and, despite the dissent of M. Barth (*Religions of India*, p. 18), this seems true. But the recession of Varuna is only in the normal way of the eclipse of the old Supreme God by a nearer deity, and does not suffice to prove a growth of agnosticism. M. Fontane (*Inde Védique*, 1881, p. 305) asserts on other grounds a popular movement of negation in the Vedic period, but offers rather slender evidence. There is better ground for his account of the system as one in which different cults had the upper hand at different times, the devotees of Indra rejecting Agni, and so on (pp. 310-11).

To meet such a doubt, a pantheistic view of things would naturally arise, and in the Vedas it often emerges.<sup>1</sup> Thus "Agni is all the Gods"; and "the Gods are only a single being under different names."<sup>2</sup> For ancient as for more civilized peoples such a doctrine had the attraction of nominally reconciling the popular cult with the skepticism it had aroused. Rising thus as freethought, the pantheistic doctrine in itself ultimately became in India a dogmatic system, the monopoly of a priestly caste, whose training

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Rig-Veda*, i, 164, 46; x, 90 (cited by Ghosa, pp. 191, 198); viii, 10 (cited by Müller, *Natural Religion*, pp. 227-29); and x, 82, 121, 129 (cited by Romesh Chunder Dutt, *Hist. of Civ. in Anc. India*, ed. 1893, i, 95-97); Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, v, 353 sq.; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 125; Weber, *Hist. of Ind. Lit.*, Eng. trans., p. 5; Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, ed. 1880, pp. 298-304, 310, 315; *Phys. Relig.*, p. 187; Barth, *Religions of India*, Eng. trans., p. 8; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii, 354.

<sup>2</sup> Barth, *Religions of India*, pp. 26, 31, citing *Rig-Veda*, v, 3, 1; i, 164, 46; viii, 53, 2. The phrase as to Agni is common in the Brāhmanas, but is not yet so in the Vedas. The second text cited is rendered by Müller: "That which is one the sages speak of in many ways—they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan" (*Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 240).

in mystical dialectic made them able to repel or baffle amateur criticism. Such fortifying of a sophisticated creed by institutions—of which the Brahmanic caste system is perhaps the strongest type—is one of the main conditions of relative permanence for any set of opinions; yet even within the Brahmanic system, by reason, presumably, of the principle that the higher truth was for the adept and need not interfere with the popular cult, there were again successive critical revisions of the pantheistic idea.

Prof. Garbe (*Philosophy of Anc. India*, sect. on *Hindu Monism*) argues that all monistic, and indeed all progressive, thinking in ancient India arose not among the Brahmins, who were conscienceless oppressors, but among the warrior caste; citing stories in the Upanishads in which Brahmins are represented as receiving such ideas from warriors. The thesis is much weakened by the Professor's acceptance of Krishna as primarily a historic character, of the warrior class. But there is ground for his general thesis, which recognizes (p. 78) that the Brahmins at length assimilated the higher thought of laymen. Max Müller puts it that "No nation was ever so completely priestridden as the Hindus were under the sway of the Brahmanic law. Yet, on the other side, the same people were allowed to indulge in the most unrestrained freedom of thought, and in the schools of their philosophy the very names of their Gods were never mentioned. Their existence was neither denied nor asserted....." (*Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 244). "Sankhya philosophy" [on which Buddhism is supposed to be based], "in its original form, claims the name of *an-īśvara*, 'lordless' or 'atheistic,' as its distinctive title" (*ibid.* p. 283).

Of the nature of a freethinking departure, among the early Brahmanists as in other societies, was the substitution of non-human for human sacrifices—a development of peaceful life-conditions which, though not primitive, must have ante-dated Buddhism. See Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 126-27 and refs.; Barth, *Religions of India*, pp. 57-59; and Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 101. Prof. Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 346) appears to hold that animal sacrifice was never a substitute for human; but his ingenious argument, on analysis, is found to prove only that in certain cases the idea of such a substitution having taken place may have been unhistorical. If it be granted that human sacrifices ever occurred—and all the evidence goes to show that they were once universal—substitution would be an obvious way of abolishing them. Historical analogy is in favour of the view that the change was forced on the priesthood from the outside, and only after a time accepted by the Brahmins. Thus we find the Khārvākas, a



school of freethinkers, rising in the Alexandrian period, making it part of their business to denounce the Brahmanic doctrine and practice of sacrifice, and to argue against all blood sacrifices; but they had no practical success (Tiele, p. 126) until Buddhism triumphed (Mitchell, *Hinduism*, 1885, p. 106; Rhys Davids, tr. of *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1899, p. 165).

In the earliest Upanishads the World-Being seems to have been figured as the totality of matter,<sup>1</sup> an atheistic view associated in particular with the teaching of Kapila,<sup>2</sup> who himself, however, was at length raised to divine status,<sup>3</sup> though his system continues to pass as substantially atheistic.<sup>4</sup> This view being open to all manner of anti-religious criticism, which it incurred even within the Brahmanic pale,<sup>5</sup> there was evolved an ideal formula in which the source of all things is "the invisible, intangible, unrelated, colourless one, who has neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet, eternal, all-pervading, subtle, and undecaying."<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Upanishads exhibit a stringent reaction against the whole content of the Vedas. Their ostensible object is "to show the utter uselessness—nay, the mischievousness—of all ritual performances; to condemn every sacrificial act which has for its motive a desire or hope of reward; to deny, if not the existence, at least the exceptional and exalted character of the Devas; and to teach that there is no hope of salvation and deliverance except by the individual self recognizing the true and universal self and finding rest there, where alone rest can be found."<sup>7</sup>

And the critical development does not end there. "In the old Upanishads, in which the hymns and sacrifices of the Veda are looked upon as useless, and as superseded by the higher knowledge taught by the forest-sages, they are not yet attacked as mere impositions. That opposition, however, sets in very decidedly in the Sutra period. In the *Nirukta* (i, 15) Yāska quotes the opinion of Kautsa, that the hymns of the Veda have no meaning at all."<sup>8</sup> In short, every form of critical revolt against incredible doctrine that has arisen in later

<sup>1</sup> Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. 1873, i, 375-76. Weber (*Ind. Lit.*, pp. 27, 137, 236, 284-85) has advanced the view that the adherents of this doctrine, who gradually became stigmatized as heretics, were the founders or beginners of Buddhism. But the view that the universe is a self-existent totality appears to enter into the Brahmanic Sankhya teaching, which is midway between the popular Nyaya system and the esoteric Vedānta (Ballantyne, *Christianity Contrasted with Hindu Philosophy*, 1859, pp. xviii, 59, 61). As to the connection between the Sankhya system and Buddhism, see Oldenberg, *Der Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, 3te Aufl., *Excurs*, pp. 443.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Wilson, *Works*, 1862-71, ii, 346.

<sup>3</sup> Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> Ballantyne, pp. 58, 61; Major Jacob, *Manual of Hindu Pantheism*, 1881, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, ed. 1880, i, 228-232, and Banerjee's *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy*, p. 73, cited by Major Jacob, *Hindu Pantheism*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Jacob, as cited, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 340-41. Cp. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 139.

Europe had taken place in ancient India long before the Alexandrian conquest.<sup>1</sup> And the same attitude continued to be common within the post-Alexandrian period; for Panini, who must apparently be dated then,<sup>2</sup> "was acquainted with infidels and nihilists";<sup>3</sup> and the teaching of Brihaspati,<sup>4</sup> on which was founded the system of the Khārṇākas—apparently one of several sections of a freethinking school called the Lokāyatas<sup>5</sup> or Lokāyatikas—is extremely destructive of Vedic pretensions. "The Veda is tainted by the three faults of untruth, self-contradiction, and tautology.....The impostors who call themselves Vedic pandits are mutually destructive.....The three authors of the Vedas were buffoons, knaves, and demons: All the well-known formulas of the pandits, and all the horrid rites for the queen commanded in the Asvamedha—these were invented by buffoons, and so all the various kinds of presents to the priests; while the eating of flesh was similarly commanded by night-prowling demons."<sup>6</sup>

To what extent such aggressive rationalism ever spread it is now quite impossible to ascertain. It seems probable that the word Lokāyata, defined by Sanskrit scholars as signifying "directed to the world of sense,"<sup>7</sup> originally, or about 500 B.C., signified "Nature-lore," and that this passed as a branch of Brahman learning.<sup>8</sup> Significantly enough, while the lore was not extensive, it came to be regarded as disposing men to unbelief, though it does not seem to have suggested any thorough training. At length, in the eighth century of our era, it is found applied as a term of abuse, in the sense of "infidel," by Kumārila in controversy with opponents as orthodox as himself; and about the same period Sankara connects with it a denial of the existence of a separate and immortal soul;<sup>9</sup> though that opinion had been debated, and not called Lokāyata, long before, when the word was current in the broader sense.<sup>10</sup> Latterly, in the fourteenth century, on the strength of some doggrel verses which cannot have belonged to the early Brahmanic Lokāyata, it stands for extreme atheism and a materialism not professed by any known school speaking for itself.<sup>11</sup> The evidence, such as it is, is preserved only in *Sarva-darsana-samgraha*, a com-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 28, 220-22. <sup>3</sup> Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 139, note, citing Panini, iv, 4, 60.

<sup>4</sup> Apparently belonging to the later or middle Buddhist period. Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> On these cp. Müller, p. 139, note; Garbe, *Philos. of Anc. India*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. Chicago, 1899, p. 25; and Weber, *Ind. Lit.* p. 246, note, with the very full research of Professor Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1899, pp. 166-72.

<sup>6</sup> Müller, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 140-41. Cp. Garbe, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Garbe, as cited.

<sup>8</sup> Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* pp. 169-71.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* p. 172.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* *ib.*



pendium of all philosophical systems, compiled in the fourteenth century by the Vedāntic teacher Mādhavāchāra.<sup>1</sup> One source speaks of an early text-book of materialism, the Sūtras of Brihaspati;<sup>2</sup> but this has not been preserved. Thus in Hindu as in later European freethought for a long period we have had to rely for our knowledge of freethinkers' ideas upon the replies made by their opponents. It is reasonable to conclude that, save insofar as the arguments of Brihaspati were common to the Khārvākas and the Buddhists,<sup>3</sup> such doctrine as his or that of the later Lokāyatikas cannot conceivably have been more than the revolt of a thoughtful minority against official as well as popular religion; and to speak of a time when "the Aryan settlers in India had arrived at the conviction that all their Devas or Gods were mere names"<sup>4</sup> is to suggest a general evolution of rational thought which can no more have taken place in ancient India than it has done to-day in Europe. The old creeds would always have defenders; and every revolt was sure to incur a reaction. In the Hitopadesa or "Book of Good Counsel" (an undated recension of the earlier *Panchatantra*, "The Five Books," which in its first form may be placed about the fifth century of our era) there occur both passages disparaging mere study of the Sacred Books<sup>5</sup> and passages insisting upon it as a virtue in itself<sup>6</sup> and otherwise insisting on ritual observances.<sup>7</sup> They seem to come from different hands.

The phenomenon of the schism represented by the two divisions of the Yazur Veda, the "White" and the "Black," is plausibly accounted for as the outcome of the tendencies of a new and an old school, who selected from their Brahmanas, or treatises of ritual and theology, the portions which respectively suited them. The implied critical movement would tend to affect official thought in general. This schism is held by Weber to have arisen only in the period of ferment set up by Buddhism; but other disputes seem to have taken place in abundance in the Brahmanical schools before that time. (Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 123; Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 10, 27, 232; Max Müller, *Anthropol. Relig.*, 1892, pp. 36-37; and Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 34.) Again, the ascetic and penance-bearing hermits, who were encouraged by the veneration paid them to exalt themselves above all save the highest Gods, would by their utterances of necessity affect the course of doctrine. Compare the same tendency as seen in Buddhism and Jainism (Tiele, pp. 135, 140).

<sup>1</sup> Trans. in English by Cowell and Gough, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Garbe, as cited, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> See Müller, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 141-42, citing Burnouf.

<sup>4</sup> Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 310.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. I, Stories ii, 7, 8, 16; vii, 180.

<sup>6</sup> Bk. I, 11, 40; St. ii, 32.

<sup>7</sup> St. vi, 162.

But in the later form of the Vedānta, "the end of the Veda," a monistic and pantheistic teaching holds its ground in our own day, after all the ups and downs of Brahmanism, alongside of the aboriginal cults which Brahmanism adopted in its battle with Buddhism; alongside, too, of the worship of the Veda itself as an eternal and miraculous document. "The leading tenets [of the Vedānta] are known to some extent in every village."<sup>1</sup> Yet the Vedāntists, again, treat the Upanishads in turn as a miraculous and inspired system,<sup>2</sup> and repeat in their case the process of the Vedas: so sure is the law of fixation in religious thought, while the habit of worship subsists.

The highest activity of rationalistic speculation within the Brahmanic fold is seen to have followed intelligibly on the most powerful reaction against the Brahmins' authority. This took place when their sphere had been extended from the region of the Punjab, of which alone the Rig-Veda shows knowledge, to the great kingdoms of Southern India, pointed to in the Sūtras,<sup>3</sup> or short digests of ritual and law designed for general official use. In the new environment "there was a well-marked lay-feeling, a widespread antagonism to the priests, a real sense of humour, a strong fund of common sense. Above all there was the most complete and unquestioned freedom of thought and expression in religious matters that the world had yet witnessed."<sup>4</sup>

The most popular basis for rejection of a given system—belief in another—made ultimately possible there the rise of a practically atheistic system capable, wherever embraced, of annulling the burdensome and exclusive system of the Brahmins, which had been obtruded in its worst form,<sup>5</sup> though not dominantly, in the new environment. Buddhism, though it cannot have arisen on one man's initiative in the manner claimed in the legends, even as stripped of their supernaturalist element,<sup>6</sup> was in its origin essentially a movement of freethought, such as could have arisen only

<sup>1</sup> Major Jacob, as cited, *preface*.

<sup>2</sup> Müller, *Psychol. Relig.*, pp. 95, 97, 126; *Lect. on the Vedānta Philos.*, 1894, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Chunder Dutt, *Hist. of Civ. in Anc. India*, as cited, i, 112-13.

<sup>4</sup> Rhys Davids, trans. of *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 166. Cp. his *Buddhism*, p. 143, as to Buddhist censures of an extravagant skepticism which denied every religious theory. In one of the Dialogues (ii, 25, p. 74) a contemporary sophist is cited as flatly denying a future state. Mr. Lillie, however (*Buddhism in Christendom*, 1887, p. 187), contends as against Professor Rhys Davids that the Upanishads were only "whispered to pupils who had gone through a severe probation."

<sup>5</sup> Prof. Weber (*Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 4) says the peoples of the Punjab never at all submitted to the Brahmanical rule and caste system. But the subject natives there must at the outset have been treated as an inferior order. Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 120 and refs.; and Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 236, 284-85; Max Müller, *Chips*, i, 228-32; Kuenen, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 258-64; and the general discussion of the problem in the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 239-63.



in the atmosphere of a much mixed society<sup>1</sup> where the extreme Brahmanical claims were on various grounds discredited, perhaps even within their own newly-adjusted body. It was stigmatized as "the science of reason," a term equivalent to "heresy" in the Christian sphere;<sup>2</sup> and its definite rejection of the Vedas made it anti-sacerdotal even while it retained the modes of speech of polytheism. The tradition which makes the Buddha<sup>3</sup> a prince suggests an upper-class origin for the reaction; and there are traces of a chronic resistance to the Brahmins' rule among their fellow-Aryans before the Buddhist period.

"The royal families, the warriors, who, it may be supposed, strenuously supported the priesthood so long as it was a question of robbing the people of their rights, now that this was effected turned against their former allies, and sought to throw off the yoke that was likewise laid upon them. These efforts were, however, unavailing: the colossus was too firmly established. Obscure legends and isolated allusions are the only records left to us in the later writings of the sacrilegious hands which ventured to attack the sacred and divinely consecrated majesty of the Brahmins; and these are careful to note at the same time the terrible punishments which befel those impious offenders" (Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 19).

The circumstances, however, that the Buddhist writings were from the first in vernacular dialects, not in Sanskrit,<sup>4</sup> and that the mythical matter which accumulated round the story of the Buddha is in the main aboriginal, and largely common to the myth of Krishna,<sup>5</sup> go to prove that Buddhism spread specially in the non-Aryan sphere.<sup>6</sup> Its practical (not theoretic)<sup>7</sup> atheism seems to have rested fundamentally on the conception of Karma, the transition of the soul, or rather of the personality, through many stages up to that in which, by self-discipline, it attains the impersonal peace of Nirvana; and of this conception there is no trace in the Vedas,<sup>8</sup> though it became a leading tenet of Brahmanism.

To the dissolvent influence of Greek culture may possibly be due some part of the success of Buddhism before our era, and even later. Hindu astronomy in the Vedic period was but

<sup>1</sup> Brahmanism had itself been by this time influenced by aboriginal elements, even to the extent of affecting its language. Weber, as cited, p. 177. Cp. Müller, *Anthrop. Relig.*, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Major Jacob, as cited, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., "the enlightened," a title given to sages in general. Weber, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 179, 299; Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> See Senart, *Essai sur la légende de Buddha*, 2e éd., p. 297 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Weber, pp. 286-87, 303.

<sup>7</sup> See Weber, pp. 301, 307; also Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 43, 83, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 117.

slightly developed (Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 246, 249, 250); and "it was Greek influence that first infused a real life into Indian astronomy" (*Id.* p. 251; cp. Letronne, *Mélanges d'Érudition*, 1860 (?), p. 40; Narrien, *Histor. Acc. of Orig. and Prog. of Astron.*, p. 33, and Lib. Use. Kn. *Hist. of Astron.*, c. ii). This implies other interactions. It is presumably to Greek stimulus that we must trace the knowledge by Aryabhata (Colebrooke's *Essays*, ed. 1873, ii, 404; cp. Weber, p. 257) of the doctrine of the earth's diurnal revolution on its axis; and the fact that in India as in the Mediterranean world the truth was later lost from men's hands may be taken as one of the proofs that the two civilizations alike retrograded owing to evil political conditions. In the progressive period (from about 320 B.C. onwards for perhaps some centuries) Greek ideas might well help to discredit traditionalism; and their acceptance at royal courts would be favourable to toleration of the new teaching. At the same time, Buddhism must have been favoured by the native mental climate in which it arose.

The main differentiation of Buddhism from Brahmanism, again, is its ethical spirit, which sets aside formalism and seeks salvation in an inward reverie and discipline; and this element in turn can hardly be conceived as arising save in an old society, far removed from the warlike stage represented by the Vedas. Whatever may have been its early association with Brahmanism<sup>1</sup> then, it must be regarded as essentially a reaction against Brahmanical doctrine and ideals; a circumstance which would account for its early acceptance in the Punjab, where Brahmanism had never attained absolute power and was jealously resisted by the free population.<sup>2</sup> And the fact that Jainism, so closely akin to Buddhism, has its sacred books in a dialect belonging to the region in which Buddhism arose, further supports the view that the reaction grew out of the thought of a type of society differing widely from that in which Brahmanism arose. Jainism, like Buddhism, is substantially atheistic,<sup>3</sup> and like it has an ancient monkish organization to which women were early admitted. The original crypto-atheism or agnosticism of the Buddhist movement thus appears as a product of a relatively high, because complex, moral and intellectual evolution. It certainly never impugned the belief in the Gods; on the contrary, the Buddha is often represented as speaking of their existence,<sup>4</sup> and at times as approving of their customary worship;<sup>5</sup> but he is never

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 27, 284-87; Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 555; Jacobi, as there cited; Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 135-36; Rhys Davids, *American Lectures on Buddhism*, pp. 115-16; *Buddhism*, p. 84; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 8-13.

<sup>2</sup> Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 4, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 35, 79, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. *Pagan Christs*, pp. 248-50.



said to counsel his own order to pray to them; he makes light of sacrifice; and above all he is made quite negative as to a future life, preaching the doctrine of Karma in a sense which excludes individual immortality.<sup>1</sup> "It cannot be denied that if we call the old Gods of the Veda—Indra and Agni and Yama—Gods, Buddha was an atheist. He does not believe in the divinity of these deities. What is noteworthy is that he does not by any means deny their bare existence.....The founder of Buddhism treats the old Gods as superhuman beings."<sup>2</sup> Thus it is permissible to say both that Buddhism recognizes Gods and that it is practically atheistic.

"The fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic. The idea of the Godhead.....was for a time at least expelled from the sanctuary of the human mind,<sup>3</sup> and the highest morality that was ever taught before the rise of Christianity was taught by men with whom the Gods had become mere phantoms, without any altars, not even an altar to the unknown God" (Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, p. 81. Cp. the same author's *Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 300.)

"He [Buddha] ignores God in so complete a way that he does not even seek to deny him; he does not suppress him, but he does not speak of him either to explain the origin and anterior existence of man or to explain the present life, or to conjecture his future life and definitive deliverance. The Buddha knows God in no fashion whatever" (Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha et sa Religion*, 1866, p. v).

"Buddhism and Christianity are indeed the two opposite poles with regard to the most essential points of religion: Buddhism ignoring all feeling of dependence on a higher power, and therefore denying the very existence of a supreme deity" (Müller, *Introd. to Sc. of Rel.*, p. 171).

"Lastly, the Buddha declared that he had arrived at [his] conclusions, not by study of the Vedas, nor from the teachings of others, but by the light of reason and intuition alone" (Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 48). "The most ancient Buddhism despises dreams and visions" (*Id.*, p. 177). "Agnostic atheism.....is the characteristic of his [Buddha's] system of philosophy" (*Id.*, p. 207).

"Belief in a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, is unquestionably a modern graft upon the unqualified atheism of Śākya Muni: it is still of very limited recognition. In none of the standard authorities.....is there the slightest

<sup>1</sup> Rhys Davids, trans. of *Dialogues*, pp. 188-89; *Amer. Lec. on Buddhism*, 1896, pp. 127-34; Hibbert Lectures, 1881, p. 109; *Buddhism*, pp. 95, 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> Max Müller, *Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 295.

<sup>3</sup> As the context in Professor Müller's work shows, these phrases are inaccurate.

allusion to such a First Cause, the existence of which is incompatible with the fundamental Buddhist dogma of the eternity of all existence" (H. H. Wilson, *Buddha and Buddhism*, in *Essays and Lectures*, ed. by Dr. R. Rost, 1862, ii, 361. Cp. p. 363).

On the other hand, the gradual colouring of Buddhism with popular mythology, the reversion (if, indeed, this were not early) to adoration and worship of the Buddha himself, and the final collapse of the system in India before the pressure of Brahmanized Hinduism, all prove the potency of the sociological conditions of success and failure for creeds and criticisms. Buddhism took the monastic form for its institutions, thus incurring ultimate petrification alike morally and intellectually; and in any case the normal Indian social conditions of abundant population, cheap food, and general ignorance involved an overwhelming vitality for the popular cults. These the orthodox Brahmins naturally took under their protection as a means of maintaining their hold over the multitude;<sup>1</sup> and though their own highest philosophy has been poetically grafted on that basis, as in the epic of the Mahābhārata and in the Bhagavat Gita,<sup>2</sup> the ordinary worship of the deities of these poems is perforce utterly unphilosophical, varying between a primitive sensualism and an emotionalism closely akin to that of popular forms of Christianity. Buddhism itself, where it still prevails, exhibits similar tendencies.<sup>3</sup>

It is disputed whether the Brahman influence drove Buddhism out of India by physical force, or whether the latter decayed because of maladaptation to its environment. Its vogue for some seven hundred years, from about 300 B.C. to about 400 A.C., seems to have been largely due to its protection and final acceptance as a State religion by the dynasty of Chandragupta (the Sandracottos of the Greek historians), whose grandson Asoka showed it special favour. His rock-inscribed edicts (for which see Max Müller, *Introd. to Science of Rel.*, pp. 5-6, 23; *Anthrop. Relig.*, pp. 40-43; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 220-28; Wheeler's *Hist. of India*, vol. iii, app. 1; Asiatic Society's *Journals*, vols. viii and xii; *Indian Antiquary*, 1877, vol. vi) show a general concern for natural ethics, and especially for tolerance; but his mention of "The Terrors of the Future" among the religious works he specially honours shows (if genuine) that normal superstition, if ever widely repudiated (which is doubtful), had interpenetrated the system. The king,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Weber, *Ind. Lit.* p. 289, note; and Banerjee, *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy*, p. 520, cited by Major Jacob, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> See Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, iv, 50 (cited by Jacob, pp. 30-31), as to the Brahman view of the licence ascribed to Krishna. And see iii, 32 (cited by Jacob, p. 14), as to a remarkable disparagement of Vedism in the Bhagavat Gita.

<sup>3</sup> Müller, *Selected Essays*, ii, 363; H. H. Wilson, as last cited, ii, 368 sq.



too, called himself "the delight of the Gods," as did his contemporary the Buddhist king of Ceylon (Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 84). Under Asoka, however, Buddhism was powerful enough to react somewhat on the West, then in contact with India as a result of the Alexandrian conquest (cp. Mahaffy, *Greek World under Roman Sway*, ch. ii; Weber's lecture on Ancient India, Eng. tr., pp. 25-26; *Indische Skizzen*, p. 28 [cited in the present writer's *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 165]; and Weber's *Hist. of Ind. Lit.*, p. 255 and p. 309, note); and the fact that after his time it entered on a long conflict with Brahmanism proves that it remained practically dangerous to that system. In the fifth and sixth centuries of our era Buddhism in India "rapidly declined"—a circumstance hardly intelligible save as a result of violence. Tiele, after expressly asserting the "rapid decline" (*Outlines*, p. 139), in the next breath asserts that there are no satisfactory proofs of such violence, and that, "on the contrary, Buddhism appears to have pined away slowly" (p. 140: contrast his *Egypt. Rel.*, p. xxi). Rhys Davids, in his *Buddhism*, p. 246 (so also Max Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, p. 43), argues for a process of violent extinction; but in his later work, *Buddhist India*, he retracts this view and decides for a gradual decline in the face of a Brahmanic revival. The evidences for violence and persecution are, however, pretty strong. (See H. H. Wilson, *Essays*, as cited, ii, 365-67.) Internal decay certainly appears to have occurred. Already in Gautama's own life, according to the legends, there were doctrinal disputes within his party (Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, p. 38); and soon heresies and censures abounded (*Introd. to Sc. of Rel.*, p. 23), till schisms arose and no fewer than eighteen sects took shape (Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 213-18).

Thus early in our inquiry we may gather, from a fairly complete historical case, the primary laws of causation as regards alike the progress and the decadence of movements of rationalistic thought. The fundamental economic dilemma, seen already in the life of the savage, presses at all stages of civilization. The credent multitude, save in the very lowest stages of savage destitution, always feeds and houses those who furnish it with its appropriate mental food; and so long as there remains the individual struggle for existence, there will always be teachers ready. If the higher minds in any priesthood, awaking to the character of their traditional teaching, withdraw from it, lower minds, howbeit "sincere," will always take their place. The innovating teacher, in turn, is only at the beginning of his troubles when he contrives, on whatever bases, to set up a new organized movement. The very process of organization, on the one hand, sets up the call for special economic sustenance—a constant

motive to compromise with popular ignorance—and, on the other hand, tends to establish merely a new traditionalism, devoid of the critical impulse in which it arose.<sup>1</sup> And without organization the innovating thought cannot communicate itself, cannot hold its own against the huge social pressures of tradition.

In ancient society, in short, there could be no continuous progress in freethinking: at best, there could but be periods or lines of relative progress, the result of special conjunctures of social and political circumstance. So much will appear, further, from the varying instances of still more ancient civilizations, the evolution of which may be the better understood from our survey of that of India.

### § 3. Mesopotamia

The nature of the remains we possess of the ancient Babylonian and Assyrian religions is not such as to yield a direct record of their development; but they suffice to show that there, as elsewhere, a measure of rationalistic evolution occurred. Were there no other ground for the inference, it might not unreasonably be drawn from the post-exilic monotheism of the Hebrews, who, drawing so much of their cosmology and temple ritual from Babylon, may be presumed to have been influenced by the higher Semitic civilizations in other ways also.<sup>2</sup> But there is concrete evidence. What appears to have happened in Babylonia and Assyria, whose religious systems were grafted on that of the more ancient Sumer-Akkadian civilization, is a gradual subordination of the numerous local Gods (at least in the thought of the more philosophic, including some of the priests) to the conception of one all-pervading power. This process would be assisted by that of imperialism; and in the recently-recovered code of Hammurabi we actually find references to *Ilu* "God" (as in the European legal phrase, "the act of God") without any further God-name.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the unifying tendency would be resisted by the strength of the traditions of the Babylonian cities, all of which had ancient cults before the later empires were built up.<sup>4</sup> Yet, again, peoples who failed in war would be in some measure led to renounce their God as weak; while those who clung to their faith

<sup>1</sup> See this brought out in a strikingly dramatic way in Mr. Dennis Hird's novel, *The Believing Bishop*.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Dr. A. Jeremias, *Monotheistische Strömungen innerhalb der Babylonischen Religion*, 1904, p. 44—a very candid research.

<sup>3</sup> *The Hammurabi Code*, by Chilperic Edwards, 1904, pp. 67, 68, 70 (§§ 240, 249, 266). The invocations of named Gods by Hammurabi at the close of the code, however, suggest that the force of the word was "a God." Cp. p. 76 with what follows; and see note on p. 93. On this question compare Jeremias, as cited, pp. 39, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peup. de l'orient*, 4e éd. p. 139; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.*, pp. 121, 213, 215; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i (1884), 161 (§ 133); iii (1901), 167 sq. (§ 103).



would be led, as in Jewry, to recast its ethic. The result was a set of compromises in which the provincial and foreign deities were either treated genealogically or grouped in family or other relations with the chief God or Gods of the time being.<sup>1</sup> Certain cults, again, were either kept always at a higher ethical level than the popular one, or were treated by the more refined and more critical worshippers in an elevated spirit;<sup>2</sup> and this tendency seems to have led to conceptions of purified deities who underlay or transcended the popular types, the names of the latter being held to point to one who was misconceived under their grosser aspects.<sup>3</sup> Astronomical knowledge, again, gave rise to cosmological theories which pointed to a ruling and creating God,<sup>4</sup> who as such would have a specially ethical character. In some such way was reached a conception of a Creator-God as the unity represented by the fifty names of the Great Gods, who lost their personality when their names were liturgically given to him<sup>5</sup>—a conception which in some statements even had a pantheistic aspect<sup>6</sup> among a "group of priestly thinkers," and in others took the form of an ideal theocracy.<sup>7</sup> There is record that the Babylonian schools were divided into different sects,<sup>8</sup> and their science was likely to make some of these rationalistic.<sup>9</sup> Professor Sayce even goes so far as to say that in the later cosmogony, "under a thin disguise of theological nomenclature, the Babylonian theory of the universe has become a philosophical materialism."<sup>10</sup>

It might be taken for granted, further, that disbelief would be set up by such a primitive fraud as the alleged pretence of the priests of Bel Merodach that the God cohabited nightly with the concubine set apart for him (Herodotos, i, 181-82), as was similarly pretended by the priests of Amun at Thebes. Herodotos could not believe the story, which, indeed, is probably a late Greek fable; but there must have been some skeptics within the sphere of the Semitic cult of sacred prostitution.

As regards freethinking in general, much would depend on the development of the Chaldean astronomy. That science,

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, pp. 219, 344; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. ed. p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Jastrow, *Religions of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1898, p. 318.

<sup>3</sup> Jastrow, p. 187; Sayce, pp. 128, 267-68. Cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. tr., i, 91; Menzies, *History of Religion*, 1895, p. 171; Gunkel, *Israel und Babylonien*, 1903, p. 30; Jeremias, as cited, pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, iii, 168; Jastrow, p. 79; Sayce, p. 331 sq., 367 sq.; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 112; Jeremias, pp. 7-23.

<sup>5</sup> Sayce, p. 305. Cp. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 452.

<sup>6</sup> Jastrow, p. 190, note, p. 319; Sayce, pp. 191-92, 367; Lenormant, pp. 112, 113, 119, 133; Jeremias, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 78; Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, pp. 152-53; Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 2nd ed. iii, 13; Maspero, p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> Strabo, xvi, c. 1, § 6. <sup>9</sup> Cp. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, i, 110; iii, 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Hibbert Lectures, p. 385.

growing out of primitive astrology (cp. Whewell, *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 108), would tend to discredit, among its experts, much of the prevailing religious thought; and they seem to have carried it so far as to frame a scientific theory of comets (Seneca, citing Apollonius Myndius, *Quaest. Nat.*, vii, 3; cp. Lib. Use. Kn. *Hist. of Astron.*, c. 3; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 186; and Weber, *Ind. Lit.*, p. 248). Such knowledge would greatly favour skepticism, as well as monotheism and pantheism. It was sought to be astrologically applied; but, as the horoscopes varied, this was again a source of unbelief (Meyer, p. 179). Medicine, again, made little progress (Herod., i, 197).

It can hardly be doubted, finally, that in Babylonia and Assyria there were idealists who, like the Hebrew prophets, repudiated alike image-worship and the religion of sacrifices. The latter repudiation occurs frequently in later Greece and Rome. There, as in Jerusalem, it could make itself heard in virtue of the restrictedness of the power of the priests, who in imperial Babylonia and Assyria, on the other hand, might be trusted to suppress or override any such propaganda, as we have seen was done in Brahmanical India.

Concerning image-worship, apart from the proved fact of pantheistic doctrine, and the parallels in Egypt and India, it is to be noted that Isaiah actually puts in the mouth of the Assyrian king a tirade against the "kingdoms of the idols" or "false gods," including in these Jerusalem and Samaria (Isa. x, 10, 11). The passage is dramatic, but it points to the possibility that in Assyria just as in Israel a disbelief in idols could arise from reflection on the spectacle of their multitude.

The chequered political history of Babylon and Assyria, however, made impossible any long-continued development of critical and philosophical thought. Their amalgamations of creeds and races had in a measure favoured such development;<sup>1</sup> and it was probably the setting up of a single rule over large populations formerly at chronic war that reduced to a minimum, if it did not wholly abolish, human sacrifice in the later pre-Persian empires;<sup>2</sup> but the inevitably subject state of the mass of the people, and the chronic military upset of the government, were conditions fatally favourable to ordinary superstition. The new universalist conceptions, instead of dissolving the special cults in pantheism, led only to a fresh competition of cults on cosmopolitan lines, all making the same pretensions, and stressing their most artificial peculiarities as all-

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, iii, § 103; Sayce, pp. 192, 345.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Jastrow, p. 662; Sayce, p. 78; and Tiele, *Hist. Comparée*, p. 209. It seems probable that human sacrifice was latterly restricted to the case of criminals.



important. Thus, when old tribal or local religions went proselytizing in the enlarged imperial field, they made their most worthless stipulations—as Jewish circumcision and abstinence from pork, and the self-mutilation of the followers of Cybelê—the very grounds of salvation.<sup>1</sup> Culture remained wholly in the hands of the priestly and official class,<sup>2</sup> who, like the priesthoods of Egypt, were held to conservatism by their vast wealth.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly we find the early religion of sorcery maintaining itself in the literature of the advanced empires.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of the Semitic priests and scribes towards the old Akkadic as a sacred language was in itself, like the use of sacred books in general, long a check upon new thought;<sup>5</sup> and though the Assyrian life seems to have set this check aside, by reason of the lack of a culture class in Assyria, the later Babylonian kingdom which rose on the fall of Assyria was too short-lived to profit much by the gain, being in turn overthrown in the second generation by Cyrus. It is significant that the conqueror was welcomed by the Babylonian priests as against their last king, the inquiring and innovating Nabonidos<sup>6</sup> (Nabu-nahid), who had aimed at a monarchic polytheism or quasi-monotheism. He is described as having turned away from Mardouk (Merodach), the great Babylonian God, who accordingly accepted Cyrus in his stead. It is thus clear that Cyrus, who restored the old state of things, was no strict monotheist of the later Persian type, but a schemer who relied everywhere on popular religious interests, and conciliated the polytheists and henotheists of Babylon as he did the Yahweh-worshipping Jews.<sup>7</sup> The Persian quasi-monotheism and anti-idolatry, however, already existed, and it is conceivable that they may have been intensified among the more cultured through the peculiar juxtaposition of cults set up by the Persian conquest.

Mr. Sayce's dictum (Hib. Lect., p. 314), that the later ethical element in the Akkado-Babylonian system is "necessarily" due to Semitic race elements, is seen to be fallacious in the light of his own subsequent admission (p. 353) as to the lateness of the development among the Semites. The difference between early Akkadian and later Babylonian was simply one of culture-stage. See Mr. Sayce's own remarks on p. 300; and compare E. Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 178, 182, 183), who

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Meyer, iii, 173.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. T. G. Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Hist. Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1902, pp. 161-63.

<sup>3</sup> Jastrow, pp. 187, 256; Sayce, pp. 316, 320, 322, 327; Meyer, i, 183; Lenormant, p. 110; Jeremias, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Sayce, pp. 326, 341; cp. Jastrow, p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, i, 599; Sayce, Hib. Lect., pp. 85-91; *Anc. Emp. of the East*, p. 245.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, iii, § 57.

entirely rejects the claim made for Semitic ethics. See, again, Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 78, and Mr. Sayce's own account (*Anc. Emp. of the East*, p. 202) of the Phœnician religion as "impure and cruel." Other writers take the line of arguing that the Phœnicians were "not Semites," and that they differed in all things from the true Semites (cp. Dr. Marcus Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, 1874, p. 10, and Farrar, as there cited). The explanation of such arbitrary judgments seems to be that the Semites are assumed to have had a primordial religious gift as compared with "Turanians," and that the Hebrews in turn are assumed to have been so gifted above other Semites. We shall best guard against a priori injustice to the Semites themselves, in the conjunctures in which they really advanced civilization, by entirely discarding the unscientific method of explaining the history of races in terms of hereditary character (see below, § 6, end).

#### § 4. Ancient Persia

The Mazdean system, or worship of Ahura Mazda (Ormazd), of which we find in Herodotos positive historical record as an anti-idolatrous and nominally monotheistic creed<sup>1</sup> in the fifth century B.C., is the first to which these aspects can be ascribed with certainty. As the Jews are found represented in the Book of Jeremiah<sup>2</sup> (assumed to have been written in the sixth century B.C.) worshipping numerous Gods with images: and as polytheistic and idolatrous practices are still described in the Book of Ezekiel<sup>3</sup> (assumed to have been written during or after the Babylonian Captivity), it is inadmissible to accept the unauthenticated writings of ostensibly earlier prophets as proving even a propaganda of monotheism on their part, the so-called Mosaic law being known to be in large part of late invention and of Babylonian derivation.<sup>4</sup> In any case, the mass of the people were clearly image-worshippers. The Persians, on the other hand, can be taken with certainty to have had in the sixth century an imageless worship (though images existed for other purposes), with a supreme God set above all others. The Magian or Mazdean creed, as we have seen, was not very devoutly held by Cyrus; but Dareios a generation later is found holding it with zeal; and it cannot have grown in a generation to the form it then bore. It must therefore be regarded as a development of the religion of some section of the "Iranian" race, centring as it does round some deities common to the Vedic Aryans.

The Mazdean system, as we first trace it in history, was the

<sup>1</sup> Herod. i, 131.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xi, 13, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. chs. vi, viii.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the recent literature on the recovered Code of Hammurabi.



religion of the Medes, a people joined with the Persians proper under Cyrus; and the Magi or priests were one of the seven tribes of the Medes,<sup>1</sup> as the Levites were one of the tribes of Israel. It may then be conjectured that the Magi were the priests of a people who previously conquered or were conquered by the Medes, who had then adopted their religion, as did the Persians after their conquest by or union with the Medes. Cyrus, a semi-Persian, may well have regarded the Medes with some racial distrust, and, while using them as the national priests, would naturally not be devout in his adherence at a time when the two peoples were still mutually jealous. When, later, after the assassination of his son Smerdis (Bardes or Bardija) by the elder son, King Cambyses, and the death of the latter, the Median and Magian interest set up the "false Smerdis," Persian conspirators overthrew the pretender and crowned the Persian Dareios Hystaspis, marking their sense of hostility to the Median and Magian element by a general massacre of Magi.<sup>2</sup> Those Magi who survived would naturally cultivate the more their priestly influence, the political being thus for the time destroyed; though they seem to have stirred up a Median insurrection in the next century against Dareios II.<sup>3</sup> However that may be, Dareios I became a zealous devotee of their creed,<sup>4</sup> doubtless finding that a useful means of conciliating the Medes in general, who at the outset of his reign seem to have given him much trouble.<sup>5</sup> The richest part of his dominions<sup>6</sup> was East-Iran, which appears to have been the original home of the worship of Ahura-Mazda.<sup>7</sup>

Such is the view of the case derivable from Herodotos, who remains the main authority; but recent critics have raised some difficulties. That the Magians were originally a non-Median tribe seems clear; Dr. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 163, 165) even decides that they were certainly non-Aryan. Compare Ed. Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.* i, 530, note, 531, §§ 439, 440), who holds that the Mazdean system was in its nature not national but abstract, and could therefore take in any race. Several modern writers, however (Canon Rawlinson, ed. of Herodotos, i, 426-31; *Five Great Monarchies*, 2nd ed. ii, 345-55, iii, 402-404; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. tr. pp. 197, 218-39; Sayce, *Anc. Emp. of the East*, p. 248), represent the Magians as not only anti-Aryan (=anti-Persian), but opposed to the very worship of Ormazd, which is specially associated with their name. It seems difficult to reconcile this view with the

<sup>1</sup> Herod. i, 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* iii, 79.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Grote, *History of Greece*, pt. ii, ch. 33 (ed. 1888, iii, 442), note.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 505 (§ 417), 542 (§ 451), 617 (§ 515); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> Herod. i, 130.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Herod. iii, 94, 98; Grote, vol. iii, p. 448.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, as cited, i, 505, 530 (§ 439); Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 163, 165.

facts; at least it involves the assumption of two opposed sets of Magi. The main basis for the theory seems to be the allusion in the Behistun inscription of Dareios to some acts of temple-destruction by the usurping Magian Gomates, brother and controller of the pretender Smerdis. (See the inscription translated in *Records of the Past*, i, 111-15.) This Meyer sets aside as an unsettled problem, without inferring that the Magians were anti-Mazdean (cp. § 449 and § 511, note). As to the massacre, however, Meyer decides (i, 613) that Herodotos blundered, magnifying the killing of "the Magus" into a slaughter of "the Magi." But this is one of the few points at which Herodotos is corroborated by Ktesias (cp. Grote, iii, 440, note). A clue to a solution may perhaps be found in the facts that, while the priestly system remained opposed to all image-worship, Dareios made emblematic images of the Supreme God (Meyer, i, 213, 617) and of Mithra; and that Artaxerxes Mnemon later put an image of Mithra in the royal temple of Susa, besides erecting many images to Anaitis. (Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, iii, 320-21, 360-61.) There may have been opposing tendencies; the conquest of Babylon being likely to have introduced new elements. The Persian art now arising shows the most marked Assyrian influences.

The religion thus imposed on the Persians seems to have been imageless by reason of the simple defect of art among its cultivators;<sup>1</sup> and to have been monotheistic only in the sense that its chief deity was supreme over all others, including even the great Evil Power, Ahriman (Angra Mainyu). Its God-group included Mithra, once the equal of Ahura-Mazda,<sup>2</sup> and later more prominent than he;<sup>3</sup> as well as a Goddess, Anahita, apparently of Akkadian origin. Before the period of Cyrus, the eastern part of Persia seems to have been but little civilized;<sup>4</sup> and it was probably there that its original lack of images became an essential element in the doctrine of its priests. As we find it in history, and still more in its sacred book, the *Zendavesta*, which as we have it represents a late liturgical compilation,<sup>5</sup> Mazdeism is a priest-made religion rather than the work of one Zarathustra or any one reformer; and its rejection of images, however originated, is to be counted to the credit of its priests, like the pantheism or nominal monotheism of the Mesopotamian, Brahmanic, and Egyptian religions. The original popular faith had clearly been a normal polytheism.<sup>6</sup> For the rest, the Mazdean ethic

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, i, 528 (§ 438).

<sup>2</sup> Darmesteter, *The Zendavesta* (S. B. E. ser.), vol. i, introd., p. 1x (1st ed.).

<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson, *Religions of the Anc. World*, p. 105; Meyer, §§ 417, 450-51.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, i, 507 (§ 418).

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Meyer, i, 506-508; Renan, as cited by him, p. 508; Darmesteter, as cited, cc. iv-ix, 2nd ed.; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer, i, 520 (§ 428).



has the usual priestly character as regards the virtue it assigns to sacrifice;<sup>1</sup> but otherwise compares favourably with Brahmanism.

As to this cult being priest-made, see Meyer, i, 523, 540, 541. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 167, 178) assumes a special reformation such as is traditionally associated with Zarathustra, holding that either a remarkable man or a sect must have established the monotheistic idea. Meyer (i, 537) holds with M. Darmesteter that Zarathustra is a purely mythical personage, made out of a Storm-God. Dr. Menzies (*Hist. of Relig.* p. 384) holds strongly by his historic actuality. The problem is analogous to those concerning Moses and Buddha; but though the historic case of Mohammed bars a confident decision in the negative, the balance of presumption is strongly against the traditional view. See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 286-88.

There is no reason to believe, however, that among the Persian peoples the higher view of things fared any better than elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> The priesthood, however enlightened it may have been in its inner culture, never slackened the practice of sacrifice and ceremonial; and the worship of subordinate spirits and the propitiation of demons figured as largely in their beliefs as in any other. In time the cult of the Saviour-God Mithra came to the front very much as did that of Jesus later; and in the one case as in the other, despite ethical elements, superstition was furthered. When, still later, the recognition of Ahriman was found to endanger the monotheistic principle, an attempt seems to have been made under the Sassanian dynasty, in our own era, to save it by positing a deity who was father of both Ahura-Mazda and Angra-mainyu;<sup>3</sup> but this last slight effort of freethinking speculation came to nothing. Social and political obstacles determined the fate of Magian as of other ancient rationalism.

According to Rawlinson, Zoroastrianism under the Parthian (Arsacide) empire was gradually converted into a complex system of idolatry, involving a worship of ancestors and dead kings (*Sixth Orient. Mon.* p. 399; *Seventh Mon.* pp. 8-9, 56). Gutschmid, however, following Justin (xli, 3, 5-6), pronounces the Parthians zealous followers of Zoroastrianism, dutifully obeying it in the treatment of their dead (*Geschichte Irans von Alexander bis zum Untergang der Arsakiden*, 1888, pp. 57-58)—a law not fully obeyed even by Dareios and his dynasty (Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, Eng. tr. i, 127). Rawlinson, on the contrary, says the Parthians burned their dead—an abomination

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, i, 524 (§ 433); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 178; Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, pp. 7-18.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, i, § 450 (p. 541).

<sup>3</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 167. Cp. Lenormant (*Chaldean Magic*, p. 229), who attributes the heresy to immoral Median Magi; and Spiegel (*Avesta*, 1852, i, 271), who considers it a derivation from Babylon.

to Zoroastrians. Certainly the name of the Parthian King Mithradates implies acceptance of Mazdeism. At the same time Rawlinson admits that in Persia itself, under the Parthian dynasty, Zoroastrianism remained pure (*Seventh Mon.* pp. 9-10), and that, even when ultimately it became mixed up with normal polytheism, the dualistic faith and the supremacy of Ormazd were maintained (*Five Monarchies*, 2nd ed. iii, 362-63; cp. Darmesteter, *Zendavesta*, i, lxvi, 2nd ed.).

### § 5. Egypt

The relatively rich store of memorials left by the Egyptian religions yields us hardly any more direct light on the growth of religious rationalism than do those of Mesopotamia, though it supplies much fuller proof that such a growth took place. All that is clear is that the comparison and competition of henotheistic cults there as elsewhere led to a measure of relative skepticism, which took doctrinal shape in a loose monism or pantheism. The language is often monotheistic, but never, in the early period, is polytheism excluded; on the contrary, it is affirmed in the same breath.<sup>1</sup> The alternate ascendancy of different dynasties, with different Gods, forced on the process, which included, as in Babylon, a priestly grouping of deities in families and triads<sup>2</sup>—the latter arrangement, indeed, being only a return to a primitive African conception.<sup>3</sup> It involved further a syncretism or a combining of various Gods into one,<sup>4</sup> and also an esoteric explanation of the God-myths as symbolical of natural processes, or else of mystical ideas.<sup>5</sup> There are even evidences of quasi-atheism in the shape of materialistic hymns on Lucretian lines.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the New Kingdom (1500 B.C.) it had been fully established for all the priesthoods that the Sun-God was the one real God, and that it was he who was worshipped in all the others.<sup>7</sup> He in turn was conceived as a pervading spiritual force, of anthropomorphic character and strong moral bias.<sup>8</sup> This seems to have been by way of a purification of one pre-eminent compound deity, Amen-Ra, to begin with, whose model was followed in other cults.<sup>9</sup> "Theocracies of this kind could not have been

<sup>1</sup> Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures on Relig. of Anc. Egypt*, 2nd ed. p. 92; Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, Eng. tr. 1897, p. 109. Cp. p. 260. Renouf (pp. 93-103) supplies an interesting analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 83; Wiedemann, as cited, p. 103 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Major Glyn Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*, 1906, pp. 354, 417, 433.

<sup>4</sup> Wiedemann, as cited, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, p. 81 (§ 66); Tiele, *Hist. of the Egypt. Relig.* Eng. tr., pp. 119, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, 2nd ed. p. 240.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, *Geschichte des Alten Egyptens*, in Oncken's series, 1877, B. iii, Kap. 3, p. 249; *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 109; Tiele, *Egypt. Relig.* pp. 149, 151, 157; Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, 4e ed., pp. 278-80; Le Page Renouf, as cited, pp. 215-30; Wiedemann, pp. 12, 13, 301; Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, Eng. tr. 1907, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> Erman, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Tiele, *Egypt. Rel.* pp. 153, 155, 156.



formed unconsciously. Men knew perfectly well that they were taking a great step in advance of their fathers."<sup>1</sup> There had occurred, in short, among the educated and priestly class a considerable development, going on through many centuries, alike in philosophical and in ethical thought; the ethics of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" being quite as altruistic as those of any portion of the much later Christian Gospels.<sup>2</sup> Such a development could arise only in long periods of peace and law-abiding life; though it is found to be accelerated after the Persian conquest, which would force upon the Egyptian priesthood new comparisons and accommodations.<sup>3</sup> And yet all this was done "without ever sacrificing the least particle of the beliefs of the past."<sup>4</sup> The popular polytheism, resting on absolute ignorance, was indestructible; and the most philosophic priests seem never to have dreamt of unsettling it, though, as we shall see, a masterful king did.

An eminent Egyptologist has written that, "whatever literary treasures may be brought to light in the future as the result of excavations in Egypt, it is most improbable that we shall ever receive from that country any ancient Egyptian work which can properly be classed among the literature of atheism or freethought; the Egyptian might be more or less religious according to his nature and temperament, but, *judging from the writings of his priests and teachers which are now in our hands*, the man who was without religion and God in some form or other was most rare, if not unknown."<sup>5</sup> It is not clear what significance the writer attaches to this statement. Unquestionably the mass of the Egyptians were always naïf believers in all that was given them as religion; and among the common people even the minds which, as elsewhere, varied from the norm of credulity would be too much cowed by the universal parade of religion to impugn it; while their ignorance and general crudity of life would preclude coherent critical thought on the subject. But to conclude that among the priesthood and the upper classes there was never any "freethinking" in the sense of disbelief in the popular and official religion, even up to the point of pantheism or atheism, is to ignore the general lesson of culture history elsewhere. Necessarily there was no "literature of atheism or freethought." Such literature could have no public, and, as a

<sup>1</sup> Tiele, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1884; 1 Hälfte, pp. 90-91; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. trans. i, 395-97; Tiele, pp. 226-30; Erman, pp. 71, 103-105.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Wiedemann, p. 302.

<sup>4</sup> Tiele, pp. 114, 118, 154. Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 101-102 (§ 85). Wiedemann, p. 260.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, 1899, end.

menace to the wealth and status of the priesthood, would have brought death on the writer. But in such a multitudinous priesthood there must have been, at some stages, many who realized the mummery of the routine religion, and some who transcended the commonplaces of theistic thought. From the former, if not from the latter, would come esoteric explanations for the benefit of the more intelligent of the laity of the official class, who could read; and it is idle to decide that deeper unbelief was privately "unknown."

It is contended, as against the notion of an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine, that the scribes "did not, as is generally supposed, keep their new ideas carefully concealed, so as to leave to the multitude nothing but coarse superstitions. The contrary is evident from a number of inscriptions which can be read by anybody, and from books which anyone can buy."<sup>1</sup> But the assumption that "anyone" could read or buy books in ancient Egypt is a serious misconception. Even in our own civilization, where "anyone" can presumably buy freethought journals or works on anthropology and the history of religions, the mass of the people are so placed that only by chance does such knowledge reach them; and multitudes are so little cultured that they would pass it by with uncomprehending indifference were it put before them. In ancient Egypt, however, the great mass of the people could not even read; and no man thought of teaching them.

This fact alone goes far to harmonize the ancient Greek testimonies as to the existence of an esoteric teaching in Egypt with Tiele's contention to the contrary. See the *pros* and *cons* set forth and confusedly pronounced upon by Professor Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. pp. 400-401. We know from Diodorus (i, 81), what we could deduce from our other knowledge of Egyptian conditions, that, apart from the priests and the official class, no one received any literary culture save in some degree the higher grades of artificers, who needed some little knowledge of letters for their work in connection with monuments, sepulchres, mummy-cases, and so forth. Cp. Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, p. 285. Even the images of the higher Gods were shown to the people only on festival-days (Meyer *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 82).

The Egyptian civilization was thus, through all its stages, obviously conditioned by its material basis, which in turn ultimately determined its polity, there being no higher contemporary civilization

<sup>1</sup> Tiele, p. 157. Cp. p. 217.



to lead it otherwise. An abundant, cheap, and regular food supply maintained in perpetuity a dense and easily-exploited population, whose lot through thousands of years was toil, ignorance, political subjection, and a primitive mental life.<sup>1</sup> For such a population general ideas had no light and no comfort; for them was the simple human worship of the local natural Gods or the presiding Gods of the kingdom, alike confusedly conceived as great powers, figured often as some animal, which for the primeval mind signified indefinite capacity and unknown possibility of power and knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Myths and not theories, magic and not ethics, were their spiritual food, albeit their peaceful animal lives conformed sufficiently to their code. And the life-conditions of the mass determined the policy of priest and king. The enormous priestly revenue came from the people, and the king's power rested on both orders.

As to this revenue see Diodorus Siculus, i, 73; and Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, Eng. tr. 1907, p. 71. According to Diodorus, a third of the whole land of the kingdom was allotted to the priesthoods. About a sixth of the whole land seems to have been given to the Gods by Ramessu III alone, besides 113,000 slaves, 490,000 cattle, and immense wealth of other kinds (Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, iii (1905), 154-55). The bulk of the possessions here enumerated seems to have gone to the temple of Amen at Thebes and that of the Sun-God at Heliopolis (Erman, as cited). It is to be noted, however, that the priestly order included all the physicians, lawyers, clerks, schoolmasters, sculptors, painters, land measurers, drug sellers, conjurers, diviners, and undertakers. Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, ed. Birch, 1878, i, 157-58; Sharpe, *Egypt. Mythol.* p. 26; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, § 68. "The sacred domains included herds of cattle, birds, fishermen, serfs, and temple servants" (Flinders Petrie, as cited, iii, 42). When the revenues assigned for a temple of Seti I were found to be misappropriated, and the building stopped, his son, Ramessu II, assigned a double revenue for the completion of the work and the worship (*id.*). Like the later priesthood of Christendom, that of Egypt forged documents to establish claims to revenue (*id.* p. 69). Captured cattle in great quantities were bestowed on temples of Amen (*id.* p. 149), whose priests were especially grasping (*id.* p. 153). Thus in the one reign of Ramessu III they received fifty-six towns of Egypt and nine of Syria and 62,000 serfs (*id.* p. 155).

This was fully seen when King Akhunaton (otherwise Echnaton, or Icheniton, or Akhunaton, or Akhunaten, or Chuenaten, or Khu-en-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Maspero, as cited, pp. 274-76.

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, i, 72.

aten, or Kku-n-aten, or Khouniatonou, or Khounaton!) = Amen-hetep or Amun-hotep (or Amenophis) IV, moved by monotheistic zeal, departed so far from the customary royal policy as to put under the ban all deities save that he had chosen for himself, repudiating the God-name Amen in his own name, and making one from that of his chosen Sun-God, Aten ("the sun's disk") or Aton or Atonou<sup>1</sup> or Iton<sup>2</sup> (latterly held to be = the Syrian Adon, "the Lord," symbolized by the sun's disk). There is reason to think that his was not a mere Sun-worship, but the cult of a deity, "Lord of the Disk," who looked through the sun's disk as through a window.<sup>3</sup> In any interpretation, however, the doctrine was wholly unacceptable to a priesthood whose multitudinous shrines its success would have emptied. Of all the host of God-names, by one account only that of the old Sun-God Ra-Harmachis was spared,<sup>4</sup> as being held identical with that of Aten; and by one account<sup>5</sup> the disaffection of priests and people rose to the point of open rebellion. At length Akhunaton, "Glory of the Disk," as he elected to name himself, built for himself and his God a new capital city in Middle Egypt, Akhet-Aten (or Khut-Aten), the modern Tell-el-Amarna, where he assembled around him a society after his own heart, and carried on his Aten-worship, while his foreign empire was crumbling. The "Tell-el-Amarna tablets" were found in the ruins of his city, which was deserted a generation after his death. Though the king enforced his will while he lived, his movement "bore no fruit whatever," his policy being reversed after his family had died out, and his own monuments and capital city razed to the ground by orthodox successors.<sup>6</sup> In the same way the earlier attempt of the alien Hyksos to suppress the native polytheism and image-worship had come to nothing.<sup>7</sup>

The history of Akhunaton is established by the later Egyptology. Sharpe makes no mention of it, though the point had been discussed from 1839 onwards. Cp. Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt*, etc., Bohn trans. 1853, p. 27; and Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind*, 1854, p. 147, and *Indigenous Races of the Earth*, 1857, pp. 116-17, in both of which places

<sup>1</sup> Maspero's spelling.

<sup>2</sup> De Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Amarna*.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero (*Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, ed. 1905, p. 251) says he respected also Osiris and Horus.

<sup>4</sup> Brugsch, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, ed. 1891, p. 216. Maspero (as cited, p. 250) recognizes no such revolt.

<sup>5</sup> Maspero, *Hist. anc. de l'orient*, 7e éd. pp. 248-54; Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, Eng. trans. ed. 1891, ch. x; Meyer, *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens*, B. iii, Kap. 4, 5; *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 271-74; Tiele, pp. 161-65; Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt*, iii (1905), 10; Wiedemann, pp. 35-39; Erman, pp. 61-70; L. W. King and H. H. Hall, *Egypt and Western Asia in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, 1907, pp. 383-87; F. W. von Bissing, *Geschichte Aegyptens in Umriss*, 1904, pp. 52-53.

<sup>7</sup> Tiele, p. 144; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 135.



will be found the king's portrait. See last reference for the idle theory that he had been emasculated, as to which the confutation by Wiedemann (*Aegyptische Geschichte*, p. 397, cited by Budge, *Hist. of Egypt*, 1902, iv, 128) is sufficient. In point of fact, he figures in the monuments as father of three or seven children (Wiedemann, *Rel. of Anc. Eg.* p. 37; Erman, p. 69; Budge, iv, 123, 127).

Dispute still reigns as to the origin of the cult to which he devoted himself. A theory of its nature and derivation, based on that of Mr. J. H. Breasted (*History of Egypt*, 1906, p. 396), is set forth in an article by Mr. A. E. P. Weigall on "Religion and Empire in Ancient Egypt" in the *Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1909. On this view Aten or Aton is simply Adon—"the Lord"—a name ultimately identified with Adonis, the Syrian Sun-God and Vegetation-God. The king's grandfather was apparently a Syrian, presumably of royal lineage; and Queen Tii or Thiy, the king's mother, who with her following had wrought a revolution against the priesthood of Amen, brought him up as a devotee of her own faith. On her death he became more and more fanatical, getting out of touch with people and priesthood, so that "his empire fell to pieces rapidly." Letters still exist (among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets) which were sent by his generals in Asia, vainly imploring help. He died at the age of twenty-eight; and if the body lately found, and supposed to be his, is really so, his malady was water on the brain.

Mr. Breasted, finding that Akhunaton's God is described by him in inscriptions as "the father and the mother of all that he made," ranks the cult very high in the scale of theism. Mr. Weigall (art. cited, p. 60; so also Budge, *Hist.* iv, 125) compares a hymn of the king's with Ps. civ, 24 sq., and praises it accordingly. The parallel is certainly close, but the document is not thereby certificated as philosophic. On the strength of the fact that Akhunaton "had dreamed that the Aton religion would bind the nations together," Mr. Weigall credits him with harbouring "an illusive ideal towards which, thirty-two centuries later, mankind is still struggling in vain" (p. 66). The ideal of subjugating the nations to one God, cherished later by Jews, and still later by Moslems, is hardly to be thus identified with the modern ideal of international peace. Brugsch, in turn, credits the king with having "willingly received the teaching about the one God of Light," while admitting that Aten simply meant the sun's disk (*Hist. of Egypt*, 1-vol. ed. p. 216).

Maspero, again, declares Tii to have been an Egyptian of old stock, and the God "Atonou" to have been the deity of her tribe (*Hist. anc.*, as cited, p. 249); and he pronounces the cult probably the most ancient variant of the religions of Ra (p. 250). Messrs. King and Hall, who also do not accept the theory of a Syrian derivation, coincide with Messrs. Breasted and Weigall

in extolling Akhunaton's creed. In a somewhat summary fashion they pronounce (work cited, p. 383) that, "given an ignorance of the true astronomical character of the sun, we see how eminently rational a religion" was this. The conception of a moving window in the heavens, which appears to be the core of it, seems rather a darkening than a development of the "philosophical speculations of the priests of the Sun at Heliopolis," from which it is held by Messrs. King and Hall to have been derived. Similarly ill-warranted is the decision (*id.* p. 384) that in Akhunaton's heresy "we see.....the highest attitude [altitude] to which religious ideas had attained before the days of the Hebrew prophets." Alike in India and in Egypt, pantheistic ideas of a larger scope than his or those of the Hebrew prophets had been attained before Akhunaton's time.

Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, on the other hand, points out that the cult of the Aten is really an ancient one in Egypt, and was carried on by Thothmes III, father of Amen-hetep II, a century before Akhunaton (Amen-hetep IV), its "original home" being Heliopolis (*History of Egypt*, 1902, iv, 48, 119). So also von Bissing, *Gesch. Aeg. in Umriss*, p. 52 (reading "Iton"). Rejecting the view that "Aten" is only a form of "Adon," Dr. Budge pronounces that "as far as can be seen now the worship of Aten was something like a glorified materialism"—whatever that may be—"which had to be expounded by priests who performed ceremonies similar to those which belonged to the old Heliopolitan sun-worship, without any connection whatsoever with the worship of Yahweh; and a being of the character of the Semitic God Adon had no place in it anywhere." Further, he considers that it "contained no doctrines on the unity or oneness of Aten similar to those which are found in the hymns to Rā, and none of the beautiful ideas on the future life with which we are familiar from the hymns and other compositions in the *Book of the Dead*" (*Ib.* pp. 120-21).

By Prof. Flinders Petrie Queen Tii or Thiy is surmised to have been of Armenian origin (see Budge, iv, 96-98, as to her being "Mesopotamian"); and Prof. Petrie, like Mr. Breasted, has inferred that she brought with her the cult of which her son became the devotee. (So also Brugsch, p. 214.) Messrs. King and Hall recognize that the cult had made some headway before Akhunaton took it up; but deny that there is any reason for supposing Queen Tii to have been of foreign origin; adding: "It seems undoubted that the Aten cult was a development of pure Egyptian religious thought." Certainty on such an issue seems hardly possible; but it may be said, as against the theory of a foreign importation, that there is no evidence whatever of any high theistic cult of Adonis in Syria at the period in question. Adonis was primarily a Vegetation-God; and the older view that Aten simply means "the sun's disk"



is hardly disposed of. It is noteworthy that under Akhunaton's patronage Egyptian sculpture enjoyed a term of freedom from the paralyzing convention which reigned before and after (King and Hall, as cited, pp. 383-84). This seems to have been the result of the innovating taste of the king (Budge, *Hist.* iv, 124-26).

As the centuries lapsed the course of popular religion was rather downward than upward, if it can be measured by the multiplication of superstitions.<sup>1</sup> When under the Ramesside dynasty the high-priests of Amen became by marriage with the royal family the virtual rulers, sacerdotalism went from bad to worse.<sup>2</sup> The priests, who held the allegorical key to mythology, seem to have been the main multipliers of magic and fable, mummary, ceremonial, and symbol; and they jealously guarded their specialty against lay competition.<sup>3</sup> Esoteric and exoteric doctrine flourished in their degrees side by side,<sup>4</sup> the instructed few apparently often accepting or acting upon both; and primitive rites all the while flourished on the level of the lowest savagery,<sup>5</sup> though the higher ethical teaching even improves, as in India.

Conflicts, conquests, and changes of dynasties seem to have made little difference in the life of the common people.<sup>6</sup> Religion was the thread by which any ruler could lead them; and after the brief destructive outbreak of Cambyses,<sup>7</sup> himself at first tolerant, the Persian conquerors allowed the old faiths to subsist, caring only, like their predecessors, to prevent strife between the cults which would not tolerate each other.<sup>8</sup> The Ptolemies are found adopting and using the native cults as the native kings had done ages before them;<sup>9</sup> and in the learned Greek-speaking society created by their dynasty at Alexandria there can have been at least as little concrete belief as prevailed in the priesthood of the older civilization. It developed a pantheistic philosophy which ultimately, in the hands of Plotinus, compares very well with that of the Upanishads and of later European systems. But this was a hot-

<sup>1</sup> "We do not find magic predominant [in the tales] until the Ptolemaic age. At that time the physical magic of the early times reappears in full force" (Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, 1898, p. 29. Cp. Maspero, p. 286; Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, pp. 64, 233).

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, *Hist.* iii, 174-75, 180.

<sup>3</sup> Tiele, pp. 180-82; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 140-43.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, ii, 48, 60-64, etc. Cp. Maspero, p. 286.

<sup>5</sup> "The Osiride and Cosmic Gods rose in importance as time went on, while the Abstract Gods continually sank on the whole. This agrees with the general idea that the imported Gods have to yield their position gradually to the older and more deeply-rooted faiths" (Petrie, as last cited, p. 95).

<sup>6</sup> The familiar narrative of Herodotus is put in doubt by the monuments. Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 246. But cp. Meyer, i, 611 (§ 508).

<sup>7</sup> Tiele, p. 158.

<sup>8</sup> See figures 209, 212, 221, 235, 242, 249, 250, in Sharpe's *Hist. of Egypt*, 7th ed.

house flower; and in the open world outside, where Roman rule had broken the power of the ancient priesthood and Greek immigration had overlaid the native element, Christianity found an easy entrance, and in a declining society flourished at its lowest level.<sup>1</sup> The ancient ferment, indeed, produced many stirrings of relative freethought in the form of Christian heresies to be noted hereafter; one of the most notable being that of Arius, who, like his antagonists Athanasius, was an Alexandrian. But the cast of mind which elaborated the dogma of the Trinity is as directly an outcome of Egyptian culture-history as that which sought to rationalize the dogma by making the popular deity a created person;<sup>2</sup> and the long and manifold internecine struggles of the sects were the due duplication of the older strifes between the worshippers of the various sacred animals in the several cities.<sup>3</sup> In the end the entire population was but so much clay to take the impress of the Arab conquerors, with their new fanatic monotheism standing for the minimum of rational thought.

For the rest, the higher forms of the ancient religion had been able to hold their own till they were absolutely suppressed, with the philosophic schools, by the Byzantine government, which at the same time marked the end of the ancient civilization by destroying or scattering the vast collection of books in the Serapeion, annihilating at once the last pagan cult and the stored treasure of pagan culture. With that culture too, however, there had been associated to the last the boundless credulity which had so long kept it company. In the second century of our era, under the Antonines, we have Apuleius telling of Isis worshipped as "Nature, parent of things, mistress of all elements, the primordial birth of the ages, highest of divinities, queen of departed spirits, first of the heavenly ones, the single manifestation of all Gods and Goddesses," who rules all things in earth and heaven, and who stands for the sole deity worshipped throughout the world under many names;<sup>4</sup> the while her worshipper cherishes all manner of the wildest superstitions, which even the subtle philosophy of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic school did not discard. All alike, with the machinery of exorcism, were passed on to the worship of the Christian Queen of Heaven, leaving out only the pantheism; and when that worship in turn was overthrown, the One God of Islam enrolled in his train the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Sharpe, ii, 287-95; Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the orthodox view of Bishop Westcott, *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 197-200.

<sup>3</sup> These fights had not ceased even in the time of Julian (Sharpe, ii, 280). Cp. Juvenal, *Sat.* xv, 33 sq.

<sup>4</sup> *Metamorphoses*, B. xi.



same host of ancient hallucinations.<sup>1</sup> The fatality of circumstance was supreme.

#### § 6. Phoenicia

Of the inner workings of thought in the Phoenician religion we know even less, directly, than can be gathered as to any other ancient system of similar notoriety,<sup>2</sup> so completely did the Roman conquest of Carthage, and the Macedonian conquest of Tyre and Sidon, blot out the literary remains of their peoples. Yet there are some indirect clues of a remarkable sort.

It is hardly to be doubted, in the first place, that Punic speculation took the same main lines as the early thought of Egypt and Mesopotamia, whose cultures, mixing in Syria as early as the fifteenth century B.C., had laid the basis of the later Phoenician civilization.<sup>3</sup> The simple fact that among the Syro-Phoenicians was elaborated the alphabet adopted by all the later civilizations of the West almost implies a special measure of intellectual progress. We can indeed trace the normal movement of syncretism in the cults, and the normal tendency to improve their ethics. The theory of an original pure monotheism<sup>4</sup> is no more tenable here than anywhere else; we can see that the general designation of the chief God of any city, usually recognizable as a Sun-God, by a title rather than a name,<sup>5</sup> though it pointed to a general worship of a pre-eminent power, in no sense excluded a belief in minor powers, ranking even as deities. It did not do so in the admittedly polytheistic period; and it cannot therefore be supposed to have done so previously.

The chief Phoenician Gods, it is admitted, were everywhere called by one or several of the titles Baal (Lord), Ram or Rimmon (High), Melech or Molech (King), Melkarth (King of the City), Eliun (Supreme), Adonai (Lord), Bel-Samin (Lord of Heaven), etc. (Cp. Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, p. 231; Tiele, *Hist. comp. des anc. relig.*, etc., Fr. tr. 1882, ch. iii, pp. 281-87; *Outlines*, p. 82; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 246, and art. "PHOENICIA" in *Encyc. Biblica*, iii, 3742-5; Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 200.) The just inference is that the Sun-God was generally worshipped, the sun being for the Semitic peoples the pre-eminent Nature-power. "He alone of all the Gods is by Philo explained not as a deified man, but as the sun, who had been invoked from the earliest times" (Meyer, last cit.). (All Gods were not Baals: the division between

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 232-33.

<sup>3</sup> Put by Canon Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> As to the universality of this tendency, see Meyer, ii, 97.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, i, 237.

them and lesser powers corresponded somewhat, as Tiele notes, to that between Theoi and Daimones with the Greeks, and Ases and Vanes with the old Scandinavians. So in Babylonia and India the Bels and Asuras were marked off from lesser deities.) The fact that the Western Semites thus carried with them the worship of their chief deities in all their colonies would seem to make an end of the assumption (Gomme, *Ethnology of Folklore*, p. 68; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 284, 250) that there is something specially "Aryan" in the "conception of Gods who could and did accompany the tribes wheresoever they travelled." Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii, 169.

The worship of the Baal, however, being that of a special Nature-power, cannot in early any more than in later times have been monotheistic. What happened was a preponderance of the double cult of the God and Goddess, Baal and Ashtoreth, as in the unquestionably polytheistic period (Rawlinson, p. 323; Tiele, *Hist. Comp.*, as cited, p. 319).

Apart from this normal tendency to identify Gods called by the same title (a state of things which, however, in ancient as in modern Catholic countries, tended at the same time to set up special adoration of a given image), there is seen in the later religion of Phoenicia a spirit of syncretism which operated in a manner the reverse of that seen in later Jewry. In the latter case the national God was ultimately conceived, however fanatically, as universal, all others being negated: in commercial Phoenicia, many foreign Gods were adopted,<sup>1</sup> the tendency being finally to conceive them as all manifestations of one Power.<sup>2</sup> And there is reason to suppose that in the cosmopolitan world of the Phoenician cities the higher intelligence reached a yet more subversive, though still fallacious, theory of religion. The pretended ancient Phoenician cosmogony of Sanchoniathon, preserved by Eusebius,<sup>3</sup> while worthless as a record of the most ancient beliefs,<sup>4</sup> may be taken as representing views current not only in the time and society of Philo of Byblos (100 C.E.), who had pretended to translate it, but in a period considerably earlier. This cosmogony is, as Eusebius complains, deliberately atheistic; and it further systematically explains away all God stories as being originally true of remarkable men.

Where this primitive form of atheistic rationalism originated we cannot now tell. But it was in some form current before the time of the Greek Evêmeros, who systematically developed it about

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 251, § 209; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 84; *Histoire comparée des anciennes religions*, Fr. tr. pp. 320-21.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson, *Phoenicia*, p. 340; Sayce, *Anc. Emp.* p. 204; Menzies, *Hist. of Relig.* p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> *Præparatio Evangelica*, B. i, c. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, i, 249.



300 B.C.; for in a monotheistic application it more or less clearly underlies the redaction of much of the Hebrew Bible, where both patriarchal and regal names of the early period are found to be old God-names; and where the Sun-God Samson is made a "judge"<sup>1</sup>—having originally been the Judge-God. In the Byblian writer, however, the purpose is not monotheistic, but atheistic; and the problem is whether this or that was the earlier development of the method. The natural presumption seems to be that the Hebrew adaptors of the old mythology used an already applied method, as the Christian Fathers later used the work of Evêmeros; and the citation from Thallos by Lactantius<sup>2</sup> suggests that the method had been applied in Chaldea, as it was spontaneously applied by the Greek epic poets who made memorable mortals out of the ancient deities Odysseus and Aeneas,<sup>3</sup> Helen, Castor and Pollux, Achilles, and many more.<sup>4</sup> It is in any case credible enough that among the much-travelling Phoenicians, with their open pantheon, an atheistic Evêmerism was thought out by the skeptical types before Evêmeros; and that the latter really drew his principles from Phoenicia.<sup>5</sup> At any rate, they were there received, doubtless by a select few, as a means of answering the customary demand for "something in place of" the rejected Gods. Concerning the tradition that an ancient Phoenician, Moschus, had sketched an atomic theory, we may again say that, though there is no valid evidence for the statement, it counts for something as proof that the Phoenicians had an old repute for rationalism.

The Byblian cosmogony may be conceived as an atheistic refinement on those of Babylon, adopted by the Jews. It connects with the theogony ascribed to Hesiod (which has Asiatic aspects), in that both begin with Chaos, and the Gods of Hesiod are born later. But whereas in Hesiod Chaos brings forth Erebus and Night (Eros being causal force), and Night bears Æther and Day to Erebus, while Earth virginally brings forth Heaven (Uranos) and the Sea, and then bears the first Gods in union with Heaven, the Phoenician fragment proceeds from black chaos and wind, after long ages, through Eros or Desire, to a kind of primeval slime, from which arise first

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 159, as to Persian methods of the same kind.

<sup>2</sup> *Div. Inst.* i, 23. <sup>3</sup> E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 104, 105.

<sup>4</sup> As to Greek instances, cp. Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1906, pp. 53, 55, 65, 92, 104; and as to Roman, see Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. trans. 1906, ch. x, where it is shown that Virginia and Lucretia are primarily ancient Latin divinities; and (ch. vii) that both Numa and Servius Tullius are probably in the same case, Servius Rex being in all likelihood the *servus rex Nemorensis* of the Arician grove, round whom turns the research of Dr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*; while *tullius* is an old Latin word for a spring. See also ch. iv as to Acca Larentia, another Goddess reduced by the historians to the status of a *hetaira*, as was Flora. Horatius Cocles (*id.* p. 157) is also a God reduced to a hero.

<sup>5</sup> So Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 204.

animals without intelligence, who in turn produce some with intelligence. The effort to expel Deity must have been considerable, for sun and moon and stars seem to arise uncreated, and the sun's action spontaneously produces further developments. The first man and his wife are created by male and female principles of wind, and their offspring proceed to worship the Sun, calling him Beel Samin. The other Gods are explained as eminent mortals deified after their death. See the details in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, Hodges' ed. pp. 1-22. As to Moschus, cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. ancienne*, 1844, i, 238; and Mosheim's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Harrison's tr. i, 20; also Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, same ed. iii, 548. On the general question of Phoenician rationalism, compare Pausanias's account (vii, 23) of his discussion with a Sidonian, who explained that Apollo was simply the sun, and his son Æsculapius simply the healing art.

At the same time there are signs even in Phoenician worship of an effort after an ethical as well as an intellectual purification of the common religion. To call "the" Phoenician religion "impure and cruel"<sup>1</sup> is to obscure the fact that in all civilizations certain types and cults vary from the norm. In Phoenicia as in Israel there were humane anti-sensualists who either avoided or impugned the sensual and the cruel cults around them; as well as ascetics who stood by human sacrifice while resisting sexual licence. That the better types remained the minority is to be understood in terms of the balance of the social and cultural forces of their civilization, not of any racial bias or defect, intellectual or moral.

The remark of E. Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.* i, 211, § 175), that an ethical or mystical conception of the God was "entirely alien" to "the Semite," reproduces the old fallacy of definite race-characters; and Mr. Sayce, in remarking that "the immorality performed in the name of religion was the invention of the Semitic race itself" (*Anc. Emp.* p. 203; contrast Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 83), after crediting the Semitic race with an ethical faculty alien to the Akkadian (above, p. 66), suggests another phase of the same error. There is nothing special to the Semites in the case save degree of development, similar phenomena being found in many savage religions, in Mexico, and in India. (Meyer in later passages and in his article on Ba'al in Roscher's *Lexikon* modifies his position as to Semitic *versus* other religions.) On the other hand, there was a chaste as well as an unchaste worship of the Phoenician Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth Karnaim, or Tanit, the Virgin, as opposed to Atergates and

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 202.



Annit, the Mother-Goddesses, had the characteristics of Artemis. Cp. Tiele, *Religion comparée*, as cited, pp. 318-19; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 159, 168-71; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 91; Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 292, 458. [In Rome, Venus Cloacina, sometimes ignorantly described as a Goddess of Vice, was anciently "the Goddess of chaste and holy matrimony" (Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, p. 199)]. For the rest, the cruelty of the Phoenician cults, in the matter of human sacrifice, was fully paralleled among the early Teutons. See Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 199; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, Pt. ii, ch. i, § 4.

### § 7. Ancient China

Of all the ancient Asiatic systems that of China yields us the first clear biographical trace of a practical rationalist, albeit a rationalist stamped somewhat by Chinese conservatism. Confucius (*Kung-fu-tse* = Kung the Master) is a tangible person, despite some mythic accretions, whereas Zarathustra and Buddha are at best but doubtful possibilities, and even Lao-Tsze (said to have been born 604 B.C.) is somewhat elusive.

Before Confucius (551-478 B.C.), it is evident, there had been a slackening in religious belief among the governing classes. It is claimed for the Chinese, as for so many other races, that they had anciently a "pure" monotheism;<sup>1</sup> but the ascription, as usual, is misleading. They saw in the expanse of heaven the "Supreme" Power, not as a result of reflection on the claims of other deities among other races, but simply as expressing their primordial tribal recognition of that special God, before contact with the God-ideas of other peoples. Monotheistic in the modern sense they could not be. Concerning them as concerning the Semites we may say that the claim of a primary monotheism for them "is also true of all primitive totemistic or clannish communities. A man is born into a community with such a divine head, and the worship of that God is the only one possible to him."<sup>2</sup> Beside the belief in the Heaven-God, there stood beliefs in heavenly and earthly spirits, and in ancestors, who were worshipped with altars.<sup>3</sup>

The remark of Professor Legge (*Religions of China*, p. 11), that the relation of the names Shang-Ti = Supreme Ruler, and T'ien = the sky, "has kept the monotheistic element prominent in the religion proper of China down to the present time,"

<sup>1</sup> Legge, *Religions of China*, 1880, pp. 11, 16; Douglas, *Confucianism and Taoism*, 1879, pp. 12, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Legge, pp. 12, 19, 23, 25, 26; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 27; Douglas, p. 79.

may serve to avert disputation. It may be agreed that the Chinese were anciently "monotheists" in the way in which they are at present, when they worship spirits innumerable. When, however, Professor Legge further says (p. 16) that the ancient monotheism five thousand years ago was "in danger of being corrupted" by nature worship and divination, he puts in doubt the meaning of the other expression above cited. He states several times (pp. 46, 51, 52) that the old monotheism remains; but speaks (p. 84) of the mass of the people as "cut off from the worship of God for themselves." And see p. 91 as to ancestor-worship by the Emperor. Tiele (*Outlines*, p. 27) in comparison somewhat overstates the polytheistic aspect of the Chinese religion in his opening definition; but he adds the essential facts. Dr. Legge's remark that "the idea of revelation did not shock" the ancient Chinese (p. 13) is obscure. He is dealing with the ordinary Akkado-Babylonian astrology. Pauthier, on the contrary (*Chine Moderne*, 1853, p. 250), asserts that in China "no doctrine has ever been put forth as revealed."

As regards ancestral worship, we have record of a display of disregard for it by the lords of Lû in Confucius's time;<sup>1</sup> and the general attitude of Confucius himself, religious only in his adherence to old ceremonies, is incompatible with a devout environment. It has been disputed whether he makes a "skeptical denial of any relation between man and a living God";<sup>2</sup> but an authority who disputes this complains that his "avoiding the personal name of T'ien, or God, and only using the more indefinite term Heaven," suggests "a coldness of temperament and intellect in the matter of religion."<sup>3</sup> He was, indeed, above all things a moralist; and concerning the spirits in general he taught that "To give one's self to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."<sup>4</sup> He would never express an opinion concerning the fate of souls,<sup>5</sup> or encourage prayer;<sup>6</sup> and in his redaction of the old records he seems deliberately to have eliminated mythological expressions.<sup>7</sup> "I would say," writes Dr. Legge (who never forgets to be a missionary), "that he was unreligious rather than irreligious; yet, by the coldness of his temperament and intellect in this matter, his influence is unfavourable to the development of true religious feeling among the Chinese people generally, and he prepared the way for the speculations of

<sup>1</sup> Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 139; cp. Menzies, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Legge, *Religions*, p. 117; *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 4th ed. p. 101; Douglas, p. 68; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Tiele, p. 31; Legge, *Religions*, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> Tiele, pp. 31-32; Douglas, pp. 68, 84. But cp. Legge, *Religions*, pp. 123, 127.

<sup>6</sup> See the citations made by Legge, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Legge, p. 140; cp. p. 117; Douglas, p. 81.



the literati of medieval and modern times, which have exposed them to the charge of atheism."<sup>1</sup>

The view that there was a very early "arrest of growth" in the Chinese religion (Menziès, *History of Religion*, p. 108), "before the ordinary developments of *mythology* and doctrine, priesthood," etc., had "time to take place," is untenable as to the mythology. The same writer had previously spoken (p. 107) of the Chinese system before Confucius as having "already parted with all savage and irrational elements." That Confucius would seek to eliminate these seems likely enough, though the documentary fact is disputed.

In the elder contemporary of Confucius, Lao-Tsze ("Old Philosopher"), the founder of Taoism, may be recognized another and more remarkable early freethinker of a different stamp, in some essential respects much less conservative, and in intellectual cast markedly more original. Where Confucius was an admirer and student of antiquity, Lao-Tsze expressly put such concern aside,<sup>2</sup> seeking a law of life within himself, in a manner suggestive of much Indian and other Oriental thought. So far as our records go, he is the first known philosopher who denied that men could form an idea of deity, that being the infinite; and he avowedly evolved, by way of makeshift, the idea of a primordial and governing Reason (*Tau*), closely analogous to the *Logos* of later Platonism. Since the same idea is traceable in more primitive forms alike in the Babylonian and Brahmanic systems,<sup>3</sup> it is arguable that he may have derived it from one of these sources; but the problem is very obscure. In any case, his system is one of rationalistic pantheism.<sup>4</sup>

His personal relation to Confucius was that of a self-poised sage, impatient of the other's formalism and regard to prescription and precedent. Where they compare is in their avoidance of supernaturalism, and in the sometimes singular rationality of their views of social science; in which latter respect, however, they were the recipients and transmitters of an already classic tradition.<sup>5</sup> Thus both had a strong bias to conservatism; and in Lao-Tsze it went the length of prescribing that the people should not be instructed.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, it is not going too far to say that no ancient people appears to have produced sane thinkers and scientific

<sup>1</sup> Legge, *Life and Teachings*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 214-22.

<sup>3</sup> Pauthier, *Chine Moderne*, p. 351. There is a tradition that Lao-Tsze took his doctrine from an ancient sage who flourished before 1120 B.C.; and he himself (*Tau Têh King*, trans. by Chalmers, *The Speculations of Lao-Tsze*, 1868, ch. 41) cites doctrine as to *Tau* from "those who have spoken (before me)." Cp. cc. 22, 41, 62, 65, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. E. J. Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, 1894, ii, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Pauthier, p. 358; Chalmers, pp. 14, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, pp. 179, 184.

moralists earlier than the Chinese. The Golden Rule, repeatedly formulated by Confucius, seems to be but a condensation on his part of doctrine he found in the older classics;<sup>1</sup> and as against Lao-Tsze he is seen maintaining the practical form of the principle of reciprocity. The older man, like some later teachers, preached the rule of returning kindness for evil,<sup>2</sup> without leaving any biographical trace of such practice on his own part. Confucius, dealing with human nature as it actually is, argued that evil should be met by justice, and kindness with kindness, else the evil were as much fostered as the good.<sup>3</sup>

It is to be regretted that Christian writers should keep up the form of condemning Confucius (so Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 144; *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 4th ed. p. 111 sq.; Douglas, p. 144) for a teaching the practice of which is normally possible, and is never transcended in their own Church, where the profession of returning good for evil merely constitutes one of the great hypocrisies of civilization. Dr. Legge does not scruple to resort to a bad sophism in this connection. "If," he says, "we only do good to them that do good to us, what reward have we?" He thus insinuates that Confucius vetoed any *spontaneous* act of benevolence. The question is not of such acts, but of kind acts to those who seek to injure us. On the other hand, Mr. Chalmers, who dedicates his translation of Lao-Tsze to Dr. Legge, actually taunts Lao-Tsze (p. 38) with absurdity in respect of *his* doctrine. Such is the sincerity of orthodox polemic. How little effect the self-abnegating teaching of Lao-Tsze, in turn, has had on *his* followers may be gathered from their very legends concerning him (Douglas, p. 182). There is a fallacy, further, in the Christian claim that Confucius (*Analects*, v, 11; xv, 23) put the Golden Rule in a lower form than that of the Gospels, in that he gave it the negative form, "Do not that which ye would *not* have done unto you." This is really the rational and valid form of the Rule. The positive form, unless construed in the restrictive sense, would merely prescribe a non-moral doing of favours in the hope of receiving favours in return. It appears, further, from the passage in the *Analects*, v, 11, that the doctrine in this form was familiar before Confucius.

Lao-Tsze, on his part, had reduced religion to a minimum. "There is not a word in the *Tâo Têh King* [by Lao-Tsze] of the sixth century B.C. that savours either of superstition or religion."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Legge, *Religions*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Tau Têh King*, as cited, pp. 38, 49, ch. 49, 63; Pauthier, p. 358; Legge, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Analects*, xxv, 36; Legge, *Religions*, p. 143; *Life and Teachings*, p. 113; Douglas, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> Legge, *Religions*, p. 164. We do find, however, an occasional allusion to deity, as in the phrase "the Great Architect" (Chalmers' trans. 1868, ch. lxxiv, p. 57), and "Heaven" is spoken of in a somewhat personalized sense. Still, Mr. Chalmers complains (p. xv) that Lao-Tsze did not recognize a personal God, but put "an indefinite, impersonal, and unconscious *Tau*" above all things (ch. iv).



But the quietist and mystical philosophy of Lao-Tsze and the practicality of Confucius alike failed to check the growth of superstition among the ever-increasing ignorant Chinese population. Says our Christian authority: "In the works of Lieh-Tsze and Chwang-Tsze, followers of Lao-Tsze, two or three centuries later, we find abundance of grotesque superstition, though we are never sure how far those writers really believed the things they relate." In point of fact, Lieh-Tsze is now commonly held by scholars to be an imaginary personage, whose name is given to a miscellaneous collection of teachings and moral tales, much interpolated and added to long after the date assigned to him—*circa* 400 B.C.<sup>1</sup> It contains a purely pantheistic statement of the cosmic problem,<sup>2</sup> and among the apologies is one in which a boy of twelve years is made tersely and cogently to rebut the teleological view of things.<sup>3</sup> The writers of such sections are not likely to have held the superstitions set forth in others. But that superstition should supervene upon light where the means of light were dwindling was a matter of course. It was but the old fatality, seen in Brahmanism, in Buddhism, in Egypt, in Islam, and in Christianity.

Confucius himself was soon worshipped.<sup>4</sup> A reaction against him set in after a century or two, doctrines of pessimism on the one hand, and of universal love on the other, finding a hearing;<sup>5</sup> but the influence of the great Confucian teacher Mencius (Meng-Tse) carried his school through the struggle. "In his teaching, the religious element retires still further into the background"<sup>6</sup> than in that of Confucius; and he is memorable for his insistence on the remarkable principle of Confucius, that "the people are born good"; that they are the main part of the State; and that it is the ruler's fault if they go astray.<sup>7</sup> Some rulers seem to have fully risen to this view of things, for we have an account of a rationalistic duke, who lived earlier than 250 B.C., refusing to permit the sacrifice of a man as a scapegoat on his behalf; and in the year 166 B.C. such sacrifices were permanently abolished by the Han Emperor Wen.<sup>8</sup> But Mencius, who, as a sociologist, excels not only Lao-Tsze but Confucius, put his finger on the central force in Chinese history when he taught that "it is only men of education who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they

<sup>1</sup> F. H. Balfour, Art. "A Philosopher who Never Lived," in *Leaves from my Chinese Scrap-book*, 1887, p. 83 sq.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 86-90.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 147; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, 1875, pp. 29, 50, 77, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, pp. 44, 47, 56, 57, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Miss Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, II, 36-37, following Chavannes.

<sup>6</sup> Tiele, p. 33.

will not have a fixed heart."<sup>1</sup> So clearly was the truth seen in China over two thousand years ago. But whether under feudalism or under imperialism, under anarchy or under peace—and the teachings of Lao-Tsze and Mencius combined to discredit militarism<sup>2</sup>—the Chinese mass always pullulated on cheap food, at a low standard of comfort, and in a state of utter ignorance. Hence the cult of Confucius was maintained among them only by recognizing their normal superstition; but on that basis it has remained secure, despite competition, and even a term of early persecution. One iconoclastic emperor, the founder of the Ch'in or Ts'in dynasty (221 or 212 B.C.), sought to extirpate Confucianism as a means to a revolution in the government; but the effort came to nothing.<sup>3</sup>

In the same way Lao-Tsze came to be worshipped as a God<sup>4</sup> under the religion called Taoism, a title sometimes mistranslated as rationalism, "a name admirably calculated to lead the mind astray as to what the religion is."<sup>5</sup> It would seem as if the older notion of the *Tau*, philosophically purified by Lao-Tsze, remained a popular basis for his school, and so wrought its degradation. The Taoists or Tao-sse "do their utmost to be as unreasonable as possible."<sup>6</sup> They soon reverted from the philosophic mysticism of Lao-Tsze, after a stage of indifferentism,<sup>7</sup> to a popular supernaturalism,<sup>8</sup> which "the cultivated Chinese now regard with unmixed contempt";<sup>9</sup> the crystallized common-sense of Confucius, on the other hand, allied as it is with official ceremonialism, retaining its hold as an esoteric code for the learned. The evolution has thus closely resembled that which took place in India.

Nowhere, perhaps, is our sociological lesson more clearly to be read than in China. Centuries before our era it had a rationalistic literature, an ethic no less earnest and far more sane than that of the Hebrews, and a line of known teachers as remarkable in their way as those of ancient Greece who flourished about the same period. But where even Greece, wrought upon by all the other cultures of antiquity, ultimately retrograded, till under Christianity it stayed at a Chinese level of unprogressiveness for a thousand years, isolated China, helped by no neighbouring culture adequate to the need, has stagnated as regards the main mass of its life, despite some political

<sup>1</sup> Legge's *Mencius*, p. 49; cp. p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Legge's *Mencius*, pp. 47, 131; Chalmers' *Lao-Tsze*, pp. 23, 28, 53, 58 (chs. xxx, xxxi, xxxvi, lxvii, lxxiv); Douglas, *Taoism*, chs. ii, iii.

<sup>3</sup> Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 147. The ruler in question seems to have been of non-Chinese descent. E. H. Parker, *China*, 1901, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Tiele, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas, p. 222.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 239.

<sup>9</sup> Tiele, p. 35; Douglas, p. 287. Taoism, however, has a rather noteworthy ethical code. See Douglas, ch. vi. It has to be noted that the translations of the *Tao Têh King* have varied to a disquieting degree. Cp. Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 121.



and other fluctuations, till our own day. Its social problem, like that of India, is now more or less dependent, unfortunately, on the solutions that may be reached in Europe, where the problem is only relatively more mature, not fundamentally different.

#### § 8. Mexico and Peru

In the religions of pre-Christian Mexico and Peru we have peculiarly interesting examples of "early" religious systems, flourishing at some such culture-level as the ancient Akkadian, in full play at the time of the European Renaissance. In Mexico a partly "high" ethical code, as the phrase goes, went concurrently with the most frightful indulgence in human sacrifice, sustained by the continuous practice of indecisive war for the securing of captives, and by the interest of a vast priesthood. In this system had been developed all the leading features of those of the Old World—the identification of all the Gods with the Sun; the worship of fire, and the annual renewal of it by special means; the conception of God-sacrifice and of communion with the God by the act of eating his slain representative; the belief in a Virgin-Mother-Goddess; the connection of humanitarian ethic with the divine command; the opinion that celibacy, as a state of superior virtue, is incumbent on most priests and on all would-be saints; the substitution of a sacramental bread for the "body and blood" of the God-Man; the idea of an interceding Mother-Goddess; the hope of a coming Saviour; the regular practice of prayer; exorcism, special indulgences, confession, absolution, fasting, and so on.<sup>1</sup> In Peru, also, many of those conceptions were in force; but the limitation of the power and numbers of the priesthood by the imperial system of the Incas, and the state of peace normal in their dominions, prevented the Mexican development of human sacrifice.

It seems probable that the Toltecs, who either fled before or were for the most part subdued or destroyed by the barbarian Chichimecs (in turn subdued by the Aztecs) a few centuries before Cortes, were on the whole a less warlike and more civilized people, with a less bloody worship.<sup>2</sup> Their God, Quetzalcoatl, retained through fear by the Aztecs,<sup>3</sup> was a comparatively benign deity opposed to human

<sup>1</sup> Details are given in the author's *Pagan Christs*, pt. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Nadaillac (*L'Amérique préhistorique*, 1883, pp. 273-84) gives them little of this credit, pronouncing them at once cruel and degenerate. He credits them, however, with being the first makers of roads and aqueducts in Central America, and cites the record of their free public hospitals, maintained by the sacerdotal kings. Prescott, on the other hand, overstated the bloodlessness of their religion (*Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed. 1890, p. 41 and ed. note).

<sup>3</sup> Réville, Hibbert Lectures, *On the Native Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, pp. 62-67.

sacrifice, apparently rather a late purification or partial rationalization of an earlier God-type than a primitively harmless conception.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as they were sundered by quarrels between the sectaries of the God Quetzalcoatl and the God Votan, though their religious wars seem to have been as cruel as those of the early Christians of North Africa, there appears to have been at work among them a movement towards unbloody religion. In any case their overthrow seems to stand for the military inferiority of the higher and more rational civilization<sup>2</sup> to the lower and more religious, which in turn, however, was latterly being destroyed by its enormously burdensome military and priestly system, and may even be held to have been ruined by its own superstitious fears.<sup>3</sup>

Among the recognizable signs of normal progress in the ordinary Aztec religion were (1) the general recognition of the Sun as the God really worshipped in all the temples of the deities with special names;<sup>4</sup> (2) the substitution in some cults of baked bread-images for a crucified human victim. The question arises whether the Aztecs, but for their overwhelming priesthood, might conceivably have risen above their system of human sacrifices, as the Aryan Hindus had done in an earlier age. Their material civilization, which carried on that of the kindred Toltecs, was at several points superior to that which the Spaniards put in its place; and their priesthood, being a leisured and wealthy class, might have developed intellectually as did the Brahmans,<sup>5</sup> if its economic basis had been changed. But only a conquest or other great political convulsion could conceivably have overturned the vast cultus of human sacrifice, which overran all life, and cherished war as a means of procuring victims.

In the kindred State of Tezcuco, civilization seems to have gone further than in Aztec Anahuac; and about the middle of the fifteenth century one Tezcucan king, the conqueror Netzahualcoyotl, who has left writings in both prose and verse, is seen attaining to

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der Amerikanischen Urreligionen*, ed. 1867, pp. 577-90; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii, 279. (Passage cited in author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 402-403; where is also noted Dr. Tylor's early view, discarded later, that Quetzalcoatl was a real personage.)

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Prescott, as cited.

<sup>3</sup> Réville, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74; Réville, p. 46. Dr. Réville speaks of the worship of the unifying deity as pretty much "effaced" by that of the lower Gods. It seems rather to have been a priestly effort to syncretize these. Still, such an effacement did take place, as we have seen, in Central Asia in ancient times, after a syncretic idea had been reached (above, p. 45). As to the alleged monotheism of King Netzahualcoyotl, of Tezcuco, mentioned above, p. 39, see Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 270, note, and p. 282; Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, as cited, p. 92; and J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74, 480.

<sup>5</sup> As to the capabilities of the Aztec language, see Bancroft, *Native Races*, ii, 727-28 (quoted in *Pagan Christs*, p. 416, note).



something like a philosophic creed, of a monotheistic stamp.<sup>1</sup> He is said to have rejected all idol-worship, and erected, as aforesaid, an altar "to the Unknown God,"<sup>2</sup> forbidding all sacrifices of blood in that worship. But among the Tezcucans these never ceased; three hundred slaves were sacrificed at the obsequies of the conqueror's son, Netzahualpilli; and the Aztec influence over the superior civilization was finally complete.

In Peru, again, we find civilization advancing in respect of the innovation of substituting statuettes for wives and slaves in the tombs of the rich; and we have already noted<sup>3</sup> the remarkable records of the avowed unbelief of several Incas in the divinity of the nationally worshipped Sun. For the rest, there was the dubious quasi-monotheistic cult of the Creator-God, Pachacamac, concerning whom every fresh discussion raises fresh doubt.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Lang, as usual, leans to the view that Pachacamac stands for a primordial and "elevated" monotheism (*Making of Religion*, pp. 263-70), while admitting the slowness of the evidence. Garcilasso, the most eminent authority, who, however, is contradicted by others, represents that the conception of Pachacamac as Creator, needing no temple or sacrifice, was "philosophically" reached by the Incas and their wise men (Lang, p. 262). The historical fact seems to be that a race subdued by the Incas, the Yuncas, had one temple to this deity; and that the Incas adopted the cult. Garcilasso says the Yuncas had human sacrifices and idols, which the Incas abolished, setting up their monotheistic cult in that one temple. This is sufficiently unlikely; and it may very well have been the fact that the Yuncas had offered no sacrifices. But if they did not, it was because their material conditions, like those of the Australians and Fuegians, had not facilitated the practice; and in that case their "monotheism" likewise would merely represent the ignorant simplicity of a clan-cult. (Compare Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii, 335 sq.; Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 52.) On the other hand, if the Incas had set up a cult without sacrifices to a so-called One God, their idea would be philosophical, as taking into account the multitude of clan-cults as well as their own national worships, and transcending these.

But the outstanding sociological fact in Incarial Peru was the

<sup>1</sup> Refs. above, p. 41. Cp. Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 270, note, and p. 282; J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74; and Nadaillac, as cited, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> The Christianized descendant of the Tezcucan kings, Ixtlixochitl, who wrote their history, adds the words, "Cause of Causes"—a very unlikely formula in the place and circumstances.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 41. Cp. Lang, as last cited, pp. 263, 282.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Kirk's ed. of Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, 1889, p. 44; Réville, pp. 189-90; Lang, as cited below.

absolute subjection of the mass of the people; and though its material development and political organization were comparable to those of ancient Persia under the Akhamenidæ, so that the Spanish Conquest stood here for mere destruction, there is no reason to think that at the best its intellectual life could have risen higher than that of pre-Alexandrian Egypt, to which it offers so many resemblances. The Incas' schools were for the nobility only.<sup>1</sup> Rationalistic Incas and high priests might have ruled over a docile, unlettered multitude, gradually softening their moral code, in connection with their rather highly-developed doctrine (resembling the Egyptian) of a future state. But these seem the natural limits, in the absence of contact with another civilization not too disparate for a fruitful union.

In Mexico, on the other hand, an interaction of native cultures had already occurred to some purpose; and the strange humanitarianism of the man-slaying priests, who made free public hospitals of part of their blood-stained temples,<sup>2</sup> suggests a possibility of esoteric mental culture among them. They had certainly gone relatively far in their moral code, as apart from their atrocious creed of sacrifice, even if we discount the testimony of the benevolent priest Sahagun;<sup>3</sup> and they had the beginnings of a system of education for the middle classes.<sup>4</sup> But unless one of the States which habitually warred for captives should have conquered the others—in which case a strong ruler might have put an end to the wholesale religious slaughter of his own subjects, as appears to have been done anciently in Mesopotamia—the priests in all likelihood would never have transcended their hideous hallucination of sacrifice. Their murdered civilization is thus the "great perhaps" of sociology; organized religion being the most sinister factor in the problem.

#### § 9. The Common Forces of Degeneration

It is implied more or less in all the foregoing summaries that there is an inherent tendency in all systematized and instituted religion to degenerate intellectually and morally, save for the constant corrective activity of freethought. It may be well, however, to note specifically the forms or phases of the tendency.

1. Dogmatic and ritual religion being, to begin with, a more or less general veto on fresh thinking, it lies in its nature that the

<sup>1</sup> Réville, p. 152, citing Garcilasso. See same page for a story of resistance to the invention of an alphabet.

<sup>2</sup> Réville, p. 50, citing Torquemada, l. viii, c. 20, end.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Affairs of New Spain*, French trans. 1880, l. vi, ch. 7, pp. 342-43. Cp. Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed. pp. 31, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Prescott, p. 34.



religious person is as such less intelligently alive to all problems of thought and conduct than he otherwise might be—a fact which at least outweighs, in a whole society, the gain from imposing a terrorized conformity on the less well-biassed types. Wherever conduct is a matter of sheer obedience to a superhuman code, it is *ipso facto* uncritical and unprogressive. Thus the history of most religions is a record of declines and reformations, each new affirmation of moral freethought *ad hoc* being in turn erected into a set of sheer commands. To set up the necessary ferment of corrective thought even for a time, there seems to be needed (a) a provocation to the intelligence, as in the spectacle of conflict of cults; and (b) a provocation to the moral sense and to self-interest through a burdensome pressure of rites or priestly exactions. An exceptional personality, of course, may count for much in the making of a movement; though the accident of the possession of kingly power by a reformer seems to count for much more than does genius.

2. The fortunes of such reactions are determined by socio-economic or political conditions. They are seen to be at a minimum, as to energy and social effect, in the conditions of greatest social invariability, as in ancient Egypt, where progress in thought, slow at best, was confined to the priestly and official class, and never affected popular culture.

3. In the absence of social conditions fitted to raise popular levels of life and thought, every religious system tends to worsen intellectually in the sense of adding to its range of superstition—that is, of ignorant and unreasoning belief. Credulity has its own momentum. Even the possession of liminary sacred books cannot check this tendency—e.g., Hinduism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Mazdeism, Christianity up till the age of doubt and science, and the systems of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and post-Confucian China. This worsening can take place alongside of a theoretic purification of belief within the sphere of the educated theological class.

Christian writers have undertaken to show that such deterioration went on continuously in India from the beginning of the Vedic period, popular religion sinking from Varuna to Indra, from Indra to the deities of the Atharva Veda, and from these to the Puranas (cp. Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, *Hinduism Past and Present*, 1885, pp. 22, 25, 26, 54). The argument, being hostile in bias from the beginning, ignores or denies the element of intellectual advance in the Upanishads and other later literature; but it holds good of the general phenomena. It holds good equally, however, of the history of Christianity in the period of the supremacy of ignorant faith and absence of

doubt and science; and is relatively applicable to the religion of the uneducated mass at any time and place.

On the other hand, it is not at all true that religious history is from the beginning, in any case, a process of mere degeneration from a pure ideal. Simple statements as to primitive ideas are found to be misleading because of their simplicity. They *can* connote only the ethic of the life conditions of the worshipper. Now, we have seen (p. 28) that small primitive peoples living at peace and in communism, or in some respects well placed, may be on that account in certain moral respects superior to the average or mass of more civilized and more intelligent peoples. [As to the kindliness and unselfishness of some savages, living an almost communal life, and as to the scrupulous honesty of others, there is plenty of evidence—e.g., as to Andaman islanders, Max Müller, *Anthrop. Relig.*, citing Colonel Cadell, p. 177; as to Malays and Papuans, Dr. Russel Wallace, *Malay Archipelago*, p. 595 (but cp. pp. 585, 587, 589); as to Esquimaux, Keane, *Man*, p. 374; Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 15, 37, 115 (but cp. pp. 41–42). In these and other cases unselfishness within the tribe is the concomitant of the communal life, and represents no conscious ethical volition, being concurrent with phases of the grossest tribal egoism, in some cases with cannibalism, and with the perpetual oppression of women. In the case of the preaching of unselfishness to the young by the old among the Australians, where Lubbock and his authorities see “the tyranny of the old” (*Origin of Civilization*, 5th ed. pp. 451–52) Mr. Lang sees a pure primeval ethic. Obviously the other is the true explanation. The closest and best qualified observers testify, as regards a number of tribes: “So far as anything like moral precepts are concerned in these tribes.....it appears to us to be most probable that they have originated in the first instance in association with the purely selfish ideas of the older men to keep all the best things for themselves, and in no case whatever are they supposed to have the sanction of a superior being” (Spencer and Gillen, *North. Tribes of Cent. Australia*, 1904, p. 504).]

The transition from that state to one of war and individualism would be in a sense degeneration; but on the other hand the entirely communistic societies are unprogressive. Broadly speaking, it is by the path of social individuation that progress in civilization has been made, the early city States and the later large military States ultimately securing within themselves some of the conditions for special development of thought, arts, and knowledge. The residual truth is that the simple religion of the harmless tribe is *pro tanto* superior to the instituted religion of the more civilized nation with greater heights and lower depths of life, the popular religion in the latter case standing for the worse conditions. But the simple religion



did not spring from any higher stage of knowledge. The old theorem revived by Mr. Lang (*Making of Religion*), as to religion having originally been a pure and highly ethical monotheism, from which it degenerated into animism and non-moral polytheism, is at best a misreading of the facts just stated. Mr. Lang never asks what "Supreme Being" and "monotheism" mean for savages who know nothing of other men's religions: he virtually takes all the connotations for granted. And as regards the most closely studied of contemporary savages our authorities come to an emphatic conclusion that they have no notion whatever of anything like a Supreme Being (Spencer and Gillen, *North. Tribes of Cent. Austr.* pp. 491-92. Cp. A. H. Keane, *Man*, p. 395, as to the "Great Spirit" of the Redskins). For the rest, Mr. Lang's theory is demonstrably wrong in its ethical interpretation of many anthropological facts, and as it stands is quite irreconcilable with the law of evolution, since it assumes an abstract monotheism as primordial. In general it approximates scientifically to the eighteenth-century doctrine of the superiority of savagery to civilization. (See it criticized in the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*, and *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. pp. 37-43, 46 sq.)

4. Even primary conditions of material well-being, if not reacted upon by social science or a movement of freethought, may in a comparatively advanced civilization promote religious degeneration. Thus abundance of food is favourable to multiplication of sacrifice, and so to priestly predominance.<sup>1</sup> The possession of domesticated animals, so important to civilization, lends itself to sacrifice in a specially demoralizing degree. But abundant cereal food-supply, making abundant population, may greatly promote human sacrifice—e.g., Mexico.

The error of Mr. Lang's method is seen in the use he makes (work cited, pp. 286-289, 292) of the fact that certain "low" races—as the Australians, Andamanese, Bushmen, and Fuegians—offer no animal sacrifice. He misses the obvious significance of the facts that these unwarlike races have as a rule no domesticated animals and no agriculture, and that their food supply is thus in general precarious. The Andamanese, sometimes described (Malthus, *Essay on Population*, ch. iii, and refs.; G. W. Earl, *Papuans*, 1853, pp. 150-51) as very ill-fed, are sometimes said to be well supplied with fish and game (Peschel, *Races of Man*, Eng. tr. 1876, p. 147; Max Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.* citing Cadell, p. 177); but in any case they have had no agriculture, and seem to have only occasional animal food in the shape of a wild hog (Colebrooke in *Asiatic Researches*, iv, 390).

<sup>1</sup> "The priest says, 'the spirit is hungry,' the fact being that he himself is hungry. He advises the killing of an animal" (Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 307).

The Australians and Fuegians, again, have often great difficulty in feeding themselves (Peschel, pp. 148, 159, 334; Darwin, *Voyage*, ch. 10). It is argued concerning the Australian aborigines that "as a rule they have an abundance" (A. F. Calvert, *The Aborigines of Western Australia*, 1894, p. 24); but this abundance is made out by cataloguing the whole edible fauna and flora of the coasts and the interior, and ignores the fact that for all hunting peoples food supply is precarious. For the Australian, "the difficulty of capturing game with his primitive methods compels him to give his whole time to the quest of food" (Keane, *Man*, p. 148). In the contrary case of the primitive Vedic Aryans, well supplied with animals, sacrifices were abundant, and tended to become more so (Müller, *Nat. Relig.* pp. 136, 185; *Physical Relig.* p. 105; but cp. pp. 98, 101; Mitchell, *Hinduism*, p. 43; Lefmann, *Geschichte des alten Indiens*, in Oncken's series, 1890, pp. 49, 430-31). Of these sacrifices that of the horse seems to have been in Aryan use in a most remote period (cp. M. Müller, *Nat. Rel.* pp. 524-25; H. Böttger, *Sonnencult der Indogermanen*, Breslau, 1891, pp. 41-44; Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, pp. 102, 299, 323; *Griechische Mythologie*, 2te Aufg. i, 462; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii, 315). Max Müller's remark (*Physical Religion*, p. 106), that "the idea of sacrifice did not exist at a very early period," because there is no common Aryan term for it, counts for nothing, as he admits (p. 107) that the Sanskrit word cannot be traced back to any more general root; and he concedes the antiquity of the practice. On this cp. Mitchell, *Hinduism*, pp. 37-38; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. p. 122. The reform in Hindu sacrifice, consummated by Buddhism, has been noted above.

5. Even scientific knowledge, while enabling the thoughtful to correct their religious conceptions, in some forms lends itself easily to the promotion of popular superstition. Thus the astronomy of the Babylonians, while developing some skepticism, served in general to encourage divination and fortune-telling; and seems to have had the same effect when communicated to the Chinese, the Hindus, and the Hebrews, all of whom, however, practised divination previously on other bases.

6. Finally, the development of the arts of sculpture and painting, unaccompanied by due intellectual culture, tends to keep religion at a low anthropomorphic level, and worsens its psychology by inviting image-worship.<sup>1</sup> It is not that the earlier and non-artistic religions are not anthropomorphic, but that they give more play for intel-

<sup>1</sup> On the general tendency cp. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, pp. 77-84.



lectual imagination than does a cult of images. But where the arts have been developed, idolatry has always arisen save when resisted by a special activity or revival of freethought to that end; and even in Protestant Christendom, where image-worship is tabooed, religious pictures now promote popular credulity and ritualism as they did in the Italian Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> So manifold are the forces of intellectual degeneration—degeneration, that is, from an attained ideal or stage of development, not from any primordial knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> In the windows of the shop of the S. P. C. K., in London, may be often seen large displays of reproduced Madonna-pictures, by Catholic artists, at popular prices.

#### CHAPTER IV

#### RELATIVE FREETHOUGHT IN ISRAEL

THE modern critical analysis of the Hebrew Sacred Books has made it sufficiently clear that in Jewish as in all other ancient history progress in religion was by way of evolving an ethical and sole deity out of normal primitive polytheism.<sup>1</sup> What was special to the Hebrews was the set of social conditions under which the evolution took place. Through these conditions it was that the relative freethought which rejected normal polytheism was so far favoured as to lead to a pronounced monotheistic cultus, though not to a philosophic monotheism.

##### § 1

As seen in their earliest historical documents (especially portions of the Book of Judges), the Hebrews are a group of agricultural and pastoral but warlike tribes of Semitic speech, with household Gods and local deities,<sup>2</sup> living among communities at the same or a higher culture stage. Their ancestral legends show similar religious practice.<sup>3</sup> Of the Hebrew tribes some may have sojourned for a time in Egypt; but this is uncertain, the written record being a late and in large part deliberately fictitious construction.<sup>4</sup> At one time twelve such tribes may have confederated, in conformity with a common ancient superstition, seen in Arab and Greek history as well as in the Jewish, as to the number twelve. As they advanced in civilization, on a basis of city life existing among a population settled in Canaan before them, parts of which they conquered, one of their public cults, that of Yahu or Yahweh, finally fixed at Jerusalem, became politically important. The special worshippers of this God (supposed to have been at first a Thunder-God or Nature-God)<sup>5</sup> were in that sense monotheists; but not otherwise than kindred neighbouring communities such as the Ammonites and Moabites and Edomites, each of which had its special God, like the cities of Babylonia and Egypt. But that the earlier conceptions of

<sup>1</sup> Compare the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 66-95.

<sup>2</sup> Jud. xvii, xviii.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. xxxi, 19, 34, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i, 56-58.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 87; *Hist. comp. des anc. relig.* p. 342 sq.; Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, iii, 35, 44, 398. Winckler (*Gesch. Israels*, i, 34-38) pronounces the original Semitic Yahu, and the Yahweh evolved from him, to have been each a "Wetter-Gott."



the people had assumed a multiplicity of Gods is clear from the fact that even in the later literary efforts to impose the sole cult of Yahweh on the people, the plural name *Elohim*, "Powers" or "Gods" (in general, things to be feared),<sup>1</sup> is retained, either alone or with that of Yahweh prefixed, though cosmology had previously been written in Yahweh's name. The Yahwists did not scruple to combine an Elohist narrative, varying from theirs in cosmology and otherwise, with their own.<sup>2</sup>

As to the original similarity of Hebraic and other Canaanite religions cp. E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* §§ 309-11 (i, 372-76); Kuenen, i, 223; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440; Winckler, *Gesch. Israels*, *passim*; Réville, *Proleg. de l'hist. des relig.* 1881, p. 85. "Before being monotheistic, Israel was simply *monolatrous*, and even that only in its religious *élite*" (Réville). "Their [the Canaanites'] worship was the same in principle as that of Israel, but it had a higher organization" (Menzies, *Hist. of Rel.* p. 179; cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 85-89). On the side of the traditional view, Mr. Lang, while sharply challenging most of the propositions of the higher critics, affirms that "we know that Israel had, in an early age, the conception of the moral Eternal; we know that, at an early age, the conception was contaminated and anthropomorphized; and we know that it was rescued, in a great degree, from this corruption, while always retaining its original ethical aspect and sanction" (*Making of Religion*, p. 295). If "we know" this, the discussion is at an end. But Mr. Lang's sole documentary basis for the assertion is just the fabricated record, reluctantly abandoned by theological scholars as such. When this is challenged, Mr. Lang falls back on the position that such low races as the Australians and Fuegians have a "moral Supreme Being," and that therefore Israel "must" have had one (p. 309). It will be found, however, that the ethic of these races is perfectly primitive, on Mr. Lang's own showing, and that his estimate is a misinterpretation. As to their Supreme Beings, it might suffice to compare Mr. Lang's *Making of Religion*, chs. ix, xii, with his earlier *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i, 168, 335; ii, 6, etc.; but, as we have seen (above, p. 93), the Supreme Being of the Australians eludes the closest search in a number of tribes; and the "moral" factor is equally intangible. Mr. Lang in his

<sup>1</sup> The word is applied to the apparition of Samuel in the story of the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii, 13).

<sup>2</sup> The unlearned reader may here be reminded that in Gen. i the Hebrew word translated "God" is "Elohim" and that the phrase in Gen. ii rendered "the Lord God" in our versions is in the original "Yah-weh-Elohim." The first chapter, with its plural deity, is, however, probably the later as well as the more dignified narrative, and represents the influence of Babylonian quasi-science. See, for a good general account of the case, *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, 1893, ch. ii. Cp. Wellhausen, *Proleg. to Hist. of Israel*, Eng. tr. pp. 196-306; E. J. Fripp, *Composition of the Book of Genesis*, 1892, *passim*; Driver, *Introd. to the Lit. of the Old Test.* 1891, pp. 18-19.

later reasoning has merely added the ambiguous and misleading epithet "Supreme," stressing it indefinitely, to the ordinary God-idea of the lower races. (Cp. Cox, *Mythol. of Aryan Races*, ed. 1882, p. 155; and K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Sci. Mythol.* Eng. tr. p. 184.)

There being thus no highly imagined "moral Eternal" in the religion of primitive man, the Hebrews were originally in the ordinary position. Their early practice of human sacrifice is implied in the legend of Abraham and Isaac, and in the story of Jephthah. (Cp. Micah vi, 7, and Kuenen on the passage, i, 237.) In their reputed earliest prophetic books we find them addicted to divination (Hosea iv, 12; Micah v, 12. Cp. the prohibition in Lev. xx, 6; also 2 Kings xxiii, 24, and Isa. iii, 2; as to the use of the ephod, teraphim, and urim and thummim, see Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, Eng. tr. i, 97-100) and to polytheism. (Amos v, 26, viii, 14; Hosea i, 13, 17, etc. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; 1 Sam. vii, 3.) These things Mr. Lang seems to admit (p. 309, *note*), despite his previous claim; but he builds (p. 332) on the fact that the Hebrews showed little concern about a future state—that "early Israel, having, so far as we know, a singular lack of interest in the future of the soul, was born to give himself up to developing, undisturbed, the theistic conception, the belief in a righteous Eternal"—whereas later Greeks and Romans, like Egyptians, were much concerned about life after death. Mr. Lang's own general theory would really require that *all* peoples at a certain stage should act like the Israelites; but he suspends it in the interest of the orthodox view as to the early Hebrews. At the same time he omits to explain why the Hebrews failed to adopt the future-state creed when they were "contaminated"—a proposition hardly reconcilable, on any view, with the sentence just quoted. The solution, however, is simple. Israel was not at all "singular" in the matter. The *early* (Homeric) Greeks and Romans (cp. as to Hades the *Iliad*, *passim*; *Odyssey*, bk. xi, *passim*; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209, as to the myth of Persephone; and Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, 1865, pp. 452-55, as to the early Romans), like the early Vedic Aryans (Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 117; Müller, *Anthropol. Relig.* p. 269), and the early Babylonians and Assyrians (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 181-82; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.* p. 364) took little thought of a future state.

"Homer knows no influence of the Psyche on the realm of the visible, and also no cult implying it.....A later poet, who made the last addition to the *Odyssey*, first introduced Hermes the 'leader of souls' [perhaps taken from a popular belief in some part of Hellas].....Underneath, in the gloomy shades, the souls waver, unconscious or at the best in a glimmering half-consciousness, endowed with faint voices, feeble, indifferent.....To speak, as do many old and recent scholars, of the 'immortal



life' of such souls, is erroneous. They live rather as the spectre of the living in a mirror.....If the Psyche outlives her visible mate (the body), she is powerless without him.....Thus is the Homeric world free from ghosts (for after the burning of the body the Psyche appears no more even in dream).....The living has peace from the dead.....No daemonic power is at work apart from or against the Gods; and the night gives to the disembodied spirits no freedom" (Rohde, *Psyche*, 4te Aufl. 1907, pp. 9-11).

This minimization of the normal primitive belief in spirits is one of the reasons for seeing in the Homeric poems the outcome of a period of loosened belief. It is not to be supposed that the pre-Homeric Greeks, like the easterns with whom the Greeks met in Ionia, had not the usual ghost-lore of savages and barbarians; and it may be that for all the early civilizations under notice the explanation is that primitive ghost-cults were abandoned by migrating and conquering races, who rejected the ghost-cults of the races whom they conquered, though they ostensibly accepted their Gods. In any case they made little religious account of a future state for themselves.

This attitude has again been erroneously regarded (*e.g.*, Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, p. 35) as peculiar to the Greeks. Mr. Lang's assumption may, in fact, be overthrown by the single case of the Phoenicians, who showed no more concern about a future life than did the Hebrews (see Canon Rawlinson's *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, pp. 351-52), but who are not pretended to have given themselves up much to "developing, undisturbed, the belief in a righteous Eternal." The truth seems to be that in all the early progressive and combative civilizations the main concern was as to the continuance of *this* life. On that head the Hebrews were as solicitous as any (*cp.* Kuenen, i, 65); and they habitually practised divination on that score. Further, they attached the very highest importance to the continuance of the individual in his offspring. The idea of a future state is first found highly developed in the long-lived cults of the long-civilized but unprogressive Egyptians; and the Babylonians were developing in the same direction. Yet the Hebrews took it up (see the evidence in Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. ii, p. 179) just when, according to Mr. Lang, their cult was "rescued, in a great degree, from corruption"; and, generally speaking, it was in the stage of maximum monotheism that they reached the maximum of irrationality. For the rest, belief in "immortality" is found highly developed in a sociologically "degenerate" and unprogressive people such as the Tasmanians (Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.* p. 433), who are yet primitively pure on Mr. Lang's hypothesis; and is normal among negroes and Australian blackfellows.

This primary polytheism is seen to the full in that constant resort of Israelites to neighbouring cults, against which so much of the Hebrew doctrine is directed. To understand their practice the modern reader has to get rid of the hallucination imposed on Christendom by its idea of revelation. The cult of Yahweh was no primordial Hebrew creed, deserted by backsliding idolaters, but a finally successful tyranny of one local cult over others. It is probable that it was originally not Palestinian, but Sinaitic, and that Yahweh became the God of Caleb-Judah only under David.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, without begging the question as to the moral sincerity of the prophets and others who identified Yahwism with morality, we must always remember that they were on their own showing devotees of a special local worship, and so far fighting for their own influence. Similar prophesying may conceivably have been carried on in connection with the same or other God-names in other localities, and the extant prophets freely testify that they had Yahwistic opponents; but the circumstance that Yahweh was worshipped at Jerusalem without any image might be an important cause of differentiation in the case of that cult. In any case it must have been through simple "exclusivism" that they reached any form of "monotheism."<sup>2</sup>

The inveterate usage, in the Bible-making period, of forging and interpolating ancient or pretended writings, makes it impossible to construct any detailed history of the rise of Yahwism. We can but proceed upon data which do not appear to lend themselves to the purposes of the later adaptors. In that way we see cause to believe that at one early centre the so-called ark of Yahweh contained various objects held to have supernatural virtue.<sup>3</sup> In the older historic documents it has, however, no such sacredness as accrues to it later,<sup>4</sup> and no great traditional prestige. This ark, previously moved from place to place as a fetish,<sup>5</sup> is said to have been transferred to Jerusalem by the early king David,<sup>6</sup> whose story, like that of his predecessors Saul and his son Solomon, is in part blended with myth.

As to David, compare 1 Sam. xvi, 18, with xvii, 33, 42. Daoud (=Dodo=Dumzi=Tammuz=Adonis) was a Semitic deity (Sayce, *Hib. Lec.* pp. 52-57, and art. "The Names of the First Three Kings of Israel," in *Modern Review*, Jan. 1884),

<sup>1</sup> Winckler, *Gesch. Isr.* i, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Cp.* Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 398.

<sup>3</sup> See the myth of the offerings put in it by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi).

<sup>4</sup> 1 Sam. iii, 3. *Cp.* ch. ii, 12-22. Contrast Lev. xvi, 2, *ff.*

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. iv, 3-11. *Cp.* v, vii, 2.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Sam. vi.



whom David resembles as an inventor of the lyre (Amos, vi, 5; cp. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2 Theil, 1836, p. 3). But Saul and Solomon also were God-names (Sayce, as cited), as was Samuel (*id.* pp. 54, 181; cp. Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. tr. p. 120); and when we note these data, and further the plain fact that Samson is a solar myth, being a personage Evemerized from Samas, the Sun-God, we are prepared to find further traces of Evemeristic redaction in the Hebrew books. To say nothing of other figures in the Book of Judges, we find that Jacob and Joseph were old Canaanitish deities (Sayce, *Lectures*, p. 51; *Records of the Past*, New Series, v, 48; Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, ii, 57-77); and that Moses, as might be expected, was a name for more than one Semitic God (Sayce, pp. 46-47), and in particular stood for a Sun-God. Abraham and Isaac in turn appear to be ancient deities (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 374, § 309; Winckler, *Gesch. Israels*, ii, 20-49). Miriam was probably in similar case (cp. *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 165-66). On an analysis of the Joshua myth as redacted, further, we may surmise another reduction of an ancient cult to the form of history, perhaps obscuring the true original of the worship of Mary and Jesus.

It seems probable, finally, that such figures as Elijah, who ascends to heaven in a fiery chariot, and Elisha, the "bald head" and miracle-worker, are similar constructions of personages out of Sun-God lore. In such material lies part of the refutation of the thesis of Renan (*Hist. des langues sémit.* 2e édit. pp. 7, 485) that the Semites were natural monotheists, devoid of mythology. [Renan is followed in whole or in part by Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern Hist.* Eng. tr. p. 6; Soury, *Relig. of Israel*, Eng. tr. pp. 2, 10; Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde*, i, 389; also Roscher, Draper, Peschel, and Bluntschli, as cited by Goldziher, *Mythology Among the Hebrews*, Eng. tr. p. 4, note. On the other side compare Goldziher, ch. i; Steinthal's *Prometheus and Samson*, Eng. tr. (with Goldziher), pp. 391, 428, etc., and his *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und den Römern*, 1863, pp. 15-17; Kuenen, *Rel. of Israel*, i, 225; Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, p. 49; Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, Eng. tr. 4th ed. i, 38-40; Müller, *Chips*, i, 345 sq.; *Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 402 sq.; *Nat. Rel.* p. 314.] Renan's view seems to be generally connected with the assumption that life in a "desert" makes a race for ever unimaginative or unitary in its thought. The *Arabian Nights* might be supposed a sufficient proof to the contrary. The historic truth seems to be that, stage for stage, the ancient Semites were as mythological as any other race; but that (to say nothing of the Babylonians and Assyrians) the mythologies of the Hebrews and of the Arabs were alike suppressed as far as possible in their monotheistic stage.

Compare Renan's own admissions, pp. 27, 110, 475, and *Hist. du peuple d'Israël*, i, 49-50.

At other places, however, Yahweh was symbolized and worshipped in the image of a young bull,<sup>1</sup> a usage associated with the neighbouring Semitic cult of Molech, but probably indigenous, or at least early, in the case of Yahweh also. A God, for such worshippers, needed to be represented by something, if he were to be individualized as against others; and where there was not an ark or a sacred stone or special temple or idol there could be no cult at all. "The practices of ancient religion require a fixed meeting-place between the worshippers and their God."<sup>2</sup> The pre-Exilic history of Yahweh-worship seems to be in large part that of a struggle between the devotees of the imageless worship fixed to the temple at Jerusalem, and other worships, with or without images, at other and less influential shrines.

So far as can be gathered from the documents, it was long before monotheistic pretensions were made in connection with Yahwism. They must in the first instance have seemed not only tyrannical but blasphemous to the devotees of the old local shrines, who in the earlier Hebrew writings figure as perfectly good Yahwists; and they clearly had no durable success before the period of the Exile. Some three hundred years after the supposed period of David,<sup>3</sup> and again eighty years later, we meet with ostensible traces<sup>4</sup> of a movement for the special aggrandizement of the Yahweh cult and the suppression of the others which competed with it, as well as of certain licentious and vicious practices carried on in connection with Yahweh worship. Concerning these, it could be claimed by those who had adhered to the simpler tradition of one of the early worships that they were foreign importations. They were, in fact, specialties of a rich ancient society, and were either native to Canaanite cities which the Hebrews had captured, or copied by them from such cities. But the fact that they were thus, on the showing of the later Yahwistic records, long associated with Yahwist practice, proves that there was no special elevation about Yahwism originally.

Even the epithet translated "Holy" (*Kadosh*) had originally no high moral significance. It simply meant "set apart," "not common" (cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 43; Wellhausen, *Israel*, in *Prolegomena* vol. p. 499); and the special substantive (*Kadesh* and *Kedeshah*) was actually the name for the most

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xii, 28; Hosea viii, 4-6. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; Hosea viii, 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 196. But see above, p. 79.  
<sup>3</sup> 11th cent. B.C. <sup>4</sup> 2 Kings xviii, 4, 22; xxiii, 48.



degraded ministrants of both sexes in the licentious worship (see Deut. xxiii, 17, 18, and *marg. Rev. Vers.* Cp. 1 Kings xiv, 25; xv, 12; 2 Kings xxiii, 7). On the question of early Hebrew ethics it is somewhat misleading to cite Wellhausen (so Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 304) as saying (*Israel*, p. 437) that religion inspired law and morals in Israel with exceptional purity. In the context Wellhausen has said that the starting-point of Israel was normal; and he writes in the *Prolegomena* (p. 302) that "good and evil in Hebrew mean primarily nothing more than salutary and hurtful: the application of the words to virtue and sin is a secondary one, these being regarded as serviceable or hurtful in their effects."

## § 2

Given the co-existence of a multitude of local cults, and of various local Yahweh-worships, it is conceivable that the Yahwists of Jerusalem, backed by a priest-ridden king, should seek to limit all worship to their own temple, whose revenues would thereby be much increased. But insoluble perplexities are set up as to the alleged movement by the incongruities in the documents. Passing over for the moment the prophets Amos and Hosea and others who ostensibly belong to the eighth century B.C., we find the second priestly reform,<sup>1</sup> consequent on a finding or framing of "the law," represented as occurring early in the reign of Josiah (641-610 B.C.). But later in the same reign are placed the writings of Jeremiah, who constantly contemns the scribes, prophets, and priests in mass, and makes light of the ark,<sup>2</sup> besides declaring that in Judah<sup>3</sup> there are as many Gods as towns, and in Jerusalem as many Baal-altars as streets. The difficulty is reduced by recognizing the quasi-historical narrative as a later fabrication; but other difficulties remain as to the prophetic writings; and for our present purpose it is necessary briefly to consider these.

1. The "higher criticism," seeking solid standing-ground at the beginning of the tangible historic period, the eighth century, singles out<sup>4</sup> the books of Amos and Hosea, setting aside, as dubious in date, Nahum and Joel; and recognizing in Isaiah a composite of different periods. If Amos, the "herdsman of Tekoa," could be thus regarded as an indubitable historical person, he would be a remarkable figure in the history of freethought, as would his nominal contemporary Hosea. Amos is a monotheist, worshipping not a God of Israel but a Yahweh or Elohim of Hosts, called also by the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. i, 18; iii, 16; vi, 13; vii, 4-22; viii, 8; xviii, 18; xx, 1, 2; xxiii, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. ii, 28; xi, 13.

<sup>4</sup> So Kuenen, vol. i, App. i to Ch. 1.

name Adon or Adonai, "the Lord," who rules all the nations and created the universe. Further, the prophet makes Yahweh "hate and despise" the feasts and burnt-offerings and solemn assemblies of his worshippers;<sup>1</sup> and he meddles impartially with the affairs of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In the same spirit Hosea menaces the solemn assemblies, and makes Yahweh desire "mercy and not sacrifice."<sup>2</sup> Similar doctrine occurs in the reputedly genuine or ancient parts of Isaiah,<sup>3</sup> and in Micah.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah, too, disparages the Sabbath and solemn meetings, staking all upon righteousness.

2. These utterances, so subversive of the priestly system, are yet held to have been preserved through the ages—through the Assyrian conquest, through the Babylonian Captivity, through the later period of priestly reconstruction—by the priestly system itself. In the state of things pictured under Ezra and Nehemiah, only the zealous adherents of the priestly law can at the outset have had any letters, any literature; it must have been they, then, who treasured the anti-priestly and anti-ritual writings of the prophets—unless, indeed, the latter were preserved by the Jews remaining at Babylon.

3. The perplexity thus set up is greatly deepened when we remember that the period assigned to the earlier prophets is near the beginning of the known age of alphabetic writing,<sup>5</sup> and before the known age of writing on scrolls. A herdsman of Judea, with a classic and flowing style, is held to have written out his hortatory addresses at a time when such writing is not certainly known to have been practised anywhere else;<sup>6</sup> and the pre-eminent style of Isaiah is held to belong to the same period.

"His [Amos's] language, with three or four insignificant exceptions, is pure, his style classical and refined. His literary power is shown in the regularity of structure which often characterizes his periods.....as well as in the ease with which he evidently writes.....Anything of the nature of roughness or rusticity is wholly absent from his writings" (Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Test.* ch. vi, § 3, p. 297, ed. 1891). Isaiah, again, is in his own narrow field one of the most gifted and skilful writers of all antiquity. The difficulty is thus nearly as great

<sup>1</sup> Amos v, 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea ii, 11; vi, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. i, 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> Mic. vi, 6-8.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. M. Müller, *Nat. Rel.* pp. 560-61; *Psychol. Rel.* pp. 30-32; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 465. If the Moabite Stone be genuine—and it is accepted by Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, in Oncken's Series, 1881, i, 86) and by most contemporary scholars—the Hebrew alphabetic writing is carried back to the ninth century B.C. An account of the Stone is given in *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, ch. xi. See again Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, bk. i, ch. 14, Eng. tr. 1894, i, 280, for a theory of the extreme antiquity of the alphabet.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Cheyne (Art. Amos in *Encyc. Biblica*) gives some good reasons for attaching little weight to such objections, but finally joins in calling Amos "a surprising phenomenon."



as that of the proposition that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is a thousand years older than that of the latest prophetic books, whose language is substantially the same. (Cp. Andrews Norton, *The Pentateuch*, ed. 1863, pp. 47-48; Renan, *Hist. des langues sémit.* 2e édit. p. 118.)

4. The specialist critics, all trained as clergymen, and mostly loth to yield more than is absolutely necessary to skepticism, have surrendered the antiquity claimed for Joel, recognizing that the arguments for that are "equally consistent with a date after the Captivity."<sup>1</sup> One of the conclusions here involved is that "Egypt is probably mentioned only as the *typical instance* of a Power hostile to Judah." Thus, when we remember the later Jewish practice of speaking of Rome as "Babylon," or "Edom," allusions by Amos and Hosea to "Assyria" have no evidential force. The same reasoning applies to the supposed ancient portions of Isaiah.

5. Even on the clerical side, among the less conservative critics, it is already conceded that there are late "insertions" in Amos. Some of these insertions are among, or analogous to, the very passages relied on by Kuenen to prove the lofty monotheism of Amos. If these passages, however, suggest a late date, no less do the others disparaging sacrifices. The same critics find interpolations and additions in Hosea. But they offer no proof of the antiquity of what they retain.

The principal passages in Amos given up as insertions by Dr. Cheyne, the most perspicacious of the English Hebraists, are: iv, 13; v, 8-9; ix, 5-6; and ix, 8-15. See his introduction to 1895 ed. of Prof. Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*, p. xv; and his art. on Amos in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Compare Kuenen, i, 46, 48. Dr. Cheyne regards as insertions in Hosea the following: i, 10-ii, 1; "and David their King" in iii, 5; viii, 14; and xiv, 1-9 (as cited, pp. xviii-xix). Obviously these admissions entail others.

6. The same school of criticism, while adhering to the traditional dating of Amos and Hosea, has surrendered the claim for the Psalms, placing most of these in the same age with the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus.<sup>2</sup> Now, the sentiment of opposition to burnt-offerings is found in some of the Psalms in language identical with that of the supposed early prophets.<sup>3</sup> Instead of taking the

<sup>1</sup> Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Test.* ch. vi, § 2 (p. 290, ed. 1891). Cp. Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, i, 86; and Robertson Smith, art. JOEL, in *Encyc. Brit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 501; Driver, ch. vii (1st ed. pp. 352 sq., esp. pp. 355, 361, 362, 365); Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 85.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Ps. i, 8-15; li, 16-17, where v. 19 is obviously a priestly addition, meant to counterveil vv. 16, 17.

former for late echoes of the latter, we may reasonably suspect that they belong to the same culture-stage.

The principle is in effect recognized by Dr. Cheyne when he writes: "Just as we infer from the reference to Cyrus in xliv, 28; xlv, 1, that the prophecy containing it proceeds from the age of the conqueror, so we may infer from the fraternal feeling towards Egypt and Assyria (Syria) in xix, 23-25, that the epilogue was written when hopes of the union and fusion of Israelitish and non-Israelitish elements first became natural for the Jews—i.e., in the early Jewish period" (*Introd. to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895, pp. 109-10).

7. From the scientific point of view, finally, the element of historical prediction in the prophets is one of the strongest grounds for presuming that they are in reality late documents. In regard to similar predictions in the gospels (Mt. xxiv, 15; Mk. xiii, 2; Lk. xxi, 20), rational criticism decides that they were written after the event. No other course can consistently be taken as to early Hebrew predictions of captivity and restoration; and the adherence of many Biblical scholars at this point to the traditional view is psychologically on a par with their former refusal to accept a rational estimate of the Pentateuchal narrative.

On some points, such as the flagrant pseudo-prediction in Isaiah xix, 18, all reasonable critics surrender. Thus "König sees rightly that xix, 18, can refer only to Jewish colonies in Egypt, and refrains from the arbitrary supposition that Isaiah was supernaturally informed of the future establishment of such colonies" (Cheyne, *Introd. to Smith's Prophets of Israel*, p. xxxiii). But in other cases Dr. Cheyne's own earlier positions appear to involve such an "arbitrary supposition," as do Kuenen's; and Smith explicitly posited it as to the prophets in general. And even as to Isaiah xix, 18, whereas Hitzig, as Havet later, rightly brings the date down to the actual historic time of the establishment of the temple at Heliopolis by Onias (Josephus, *Ant.* xiii, 3, 1; *Wars*, vii, 10, 2), about 160 B.C., Dr. Cheyne (*Introd. to Isaiah*, p. 108) compromises by dating it about 275 B.C.

The lateness of the bulk of the prophetic writings has been ably argued by Ernest Havet (*Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, vol. iv, 1878, ch. vi; and in the posthumous vol., *La Modernité des Prophètes*, 1891), who supports his case by many cogent reasonings. For instance, besides the argument as to Isaiah xix, 18, above noted: (1) The frequent prediction of the ruin of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Isa. ch. xxiii; Jer. xxv, 22; Ezek. xxvi, 7; ch. xxvii), false as to him (a fact which might be construed as a proof of the fallibility of the prophets and the



candour of their transcribers), is to be understood in the light of other post-predictions as referring to the actual capture of the city by Alexander. (2) Hosea's prediction of the fall of Judah as well as of Israel, and of their being united, places the passage after the Exile, and may even be held to bring it down to the period of the Asmoneans. So with many other details: the whole argument deserves careful study. M. Havet's views were, of course, scouted by the conservative specialists, as their predecessors scouted the entire hypothesis of Graf, now taken in its essentials as the basis of sound Biblical criticism. M. Scherer somewhat unintelligently objected to him (*Études sur la litt. contemp.* vii, 268) that he was not a Hebraist. There is no question of philology involved. It was non-Hebraists who first pointed out the practical incredibility of the central Pentateuchal narrative, on the truth of which Kuenen himself long stood with other Hebraists. (Cp. Wellhausen, *Proleg.* pp. 39, 347; also his (4th) ed. of Bleek's *Einleit. in das alte Test.* 1878, p. 154; and Kuenen, *Hexateuch*, Eng. tr. pp. xv, 43.) Colenso's argument, in the gist of which he was long preceded by lay freethinkers, was one of simple common sense. The weak side of M. Havet's case is his undertaking to bring the prophets bodily down to the Maccabean period. This is claiming too much. But his negative argument is not affected by the reply (Darmesteter, *Les Prophètes d'Israël*, 1895, pp. 128-31) to his constructive theory.

[Since the above was written, two French critics, MM. Dujardin and Maurice Vernes, have sought vigorously to reconstruct the history of the prophetic books upon new lines. I have been unable to acquiesce in their views at essential points, but would refer the reader to the lucid and interesting survey of the problem in Mr. T. Whittaker's *Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets* (Black, 1911), ch. vi.]

It is true that where hardly any documentary datum is intrinsically sure, it is difficult to prove a negative for one more than for another. The historical narratives being systematically tampered with by one writer after another, and even presumptively late writings being interpolated by still later scribes, we can never have demonstrative proof as to the original date of any one prophet. Thus it is arguable that fragments of utterance from eighth-century prophets may have survived orally and been made the nucleus of later documents. This view would be reconcilable with the fact that the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah are all introduced with some modification of the formula that they prophesied "in the days of Uzziash, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," Jeroboam's name being added in the cases of Hosea and

Amos. But that detail is also reconcilable with absolute fabrication. To say nothing of sheer bad faith in a community whose moral code said nothing against fraud save in the form of judicial perjury, the Hebrew literature is profoundly compromised by the simple fact that the religious development of the people made the prestige of antiquity more essential there for the purposes of propaganda than in almost any other society known to us. Hence an all-pervading principle of literary dissimulation; and what freethinking there was had in general to wear the guise of the very force of unreasoning traditionalism to which it was inwardly most opposed. Only thus could new thought find a hearing and secure its preservation at the hands of the tribe of formalists. Even the pessimist Koheleth, wearied with groping science, yet believing nothing of the doctrine of immortality, must needs follow precedent and pose as the fabulous King Solomon, son of the half-mythic David.

### § 3

We are forced, then, to regard with distrust all passages in the "early" prophets which express either a disregard of sacrifice and ritual, or a universalism incongruous with all that we know of the native culture of their period. The strongest ground for surmising a really "high" development of monotheism in Judah before the Captivity is the stability of the life there as compared with northern Israel.<sup>1</sup> In this respect the conditions might indeed be considered favourable to priestly or other culture; but, on the other hand, the records themselves exhibit a predominant polytheism. The presumption, then, is strong that the "advanced" passages in the prophets concerning sacrifice belong to an age when such ideas had been reached in more civilized nations, with whose thought travelled Jews could come in contact.

It is true that some such ideas were current in Egypt many centuries before the period under notice—a fact which alone discounts the ethical originality claimed for the Hebrew prophets. *E.g.*, the following passage from the papyrus of Ani, belonging to the Nineteenth Dynasty, not later than 1288 B.C.: "That which is detestable in the sanctuary of God is noisy feasts; if thou implore him with a loving heart of which all the words are mysterious, he will do thy matters, he hears thy words, he accepts thine offerings" (*Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, by Flinders Petrie, 1898, p. 160). The word rendered "mysterious" here may mean "magical"

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Kuenen, 1, 156; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 139; *Israel*, p. 478.



or "liturgical," or may merely prescribe privacy or silence; and this last is the construction put upon it by Renouf (Hibbert Lectures, 2nd ed. p. 102) and Erman (*Handbook of Eg. Relig.* Eng. tr. p. 84). The same doctrine is put in a hymn to Thoth (*id.*). But in any case we must look for later culture-contacts as the source of the later Hebrew radicalism under notice, though Egyptian sources are not to be wholly set aside. See Kuenen, i, 395; and Brugsch, as there cited; but cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440.

It is clear that not only did they accept a cosmogony from the Babylonians, but they were influenced by the lore of the Zoroastrian Persians, with whom, as with the monotheists or pantheists of Babylon, they would have grounds of sympathy. It is an open question whether their special hostility to images does not date from the time of Persian contact.<sup>1</sup> Concerning the restoration, it has been argued that only a few Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem "both under Cyrus and under Dareios"; and that, though the temple was rebuilt under Dareios Hystaspis, the builders were not the Gola or returned exiles, but that part of the Judahite population which had not been deported to Babylon.<sup>2</sup> The problem is obscure;<sup>3</sup> but, at least, the separatist spirit of the redacted narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah (which in any case tell of an opposite spirit) is not to be taken as a decisive clue to the character of the new religion. For the rest, the many Jews who remained in Babylon or spread elsewhere in the Persian Empire, and who developed their creed on a non-local basis, were bound to be in some way affected by the surrounding theology. And it is tolerably certain that not only was the notion of angels derived by the Jews from either the Babylonians or the Persians, but their rigid Sabbath and their weekly synagogue meetings came from one or both of these sources.

That the Sabbath was an Akkado-Babylonian and Assyrian institution is now well established (G. Smith, *Assyrian Eponym Canon*, 1875, p. 20; Jastrow, *Relig. of Bab. and Assyria*, p. 377; Sayce, Hib. Lect. p. 76, and in *Variorum Teacher's Bible*, ed. 1885, *Aids*, p. 71). It was before the fact was ascertained that Kuenen wrote of the Sabbath (i, 245) as peculiar to Israel. The Hebrews may have had it before the Exile; but it was

<sup>1</sup> As to a possible prehistoric connection of Hebrews and Perso-Aryans, see Kuenen, i, 254, discussing Tiele and Spiegel, and iii, 35, 44, treating of Tiele's view, set forth in his *Gedienst van Zarathustra*, that fire-worship was the original basis of Yahwism. Cp. Land's views, discussed by Kuenen, p. 398; and Renan, *Hist. des langues sémit.* p. 473.

<sup>2</sup> Cheyne, *Introd. to Isaiah*, Prol. pp. xxx, xxxviii, following Koster.

<sup>3</sup> There is a cognate dispute as to the condition of the Samaritans at the time of the Return. Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 602) holds that they were numerous and well-placed. Winckler (*Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, 1892, p. 107) argues that, on the contrary, they were poor and unorganized, and looked to the Jews for help. So also E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii (1901), 214.

clearly not then a great institution; and the mention of Sabbaths in Amos (viii, 5) and Isaiah (i, 13) is one of the reasons for doubting the antiquity of those books. The custom of synagogue meetings on the Sabbath is post-exilic, and may have arisen either in Babylon itself (so Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 492) or in imitation of Parsee practice (so Tiele, cited by Kuenen, iii, 35). Compare E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii (1901), § 131. The same alternative arises with regard to the belief in angels, usually regarded as certainly Persian in origin (cp. Kuenen, iii, 37; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 90; and Sack, *Die altjüdische Religion*, 1889, p. 133). This also could have been Babylonian (Sayce, in Var. Bible, as cited, p. 71); even the demon Asmodeus in the Book of Tobit, usually taken as Persian, being of Babylonian derivation (*id.*). Cp. Darmesteter's introd. to *Zendavesta*, 2nd ed. ch. v. On the other hand, the conception of Satan, the Adversary, as seen in 1 Chr. xxi, 1; Zech. iii, 1, 2, seems to come from the Persian Ahriman, though the Satan of Job has not Ahriman's status. Such a modification would come of the wish to insist on the supremacy of the good God. And this quasi-monotheistic view, again, we are led to regard, in the case of the prophets, as a possible Babylonian derivation, or at least as a result of the contact of Yahwists with Babylonian culture. To a foreign influence, finally, must be definitely attributed the later Priestly Code, over-ruling Deuteronomy, lowering the Levites, setting up a high priest, calling the dues into the sanctuary, resting on the Torah the cultus which before was rested on the patriarchs, and providing cities and land for the Aaronidae and the Levites (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 123, 127, 147, 149, 347; *Israel*, pp. 495, 497)—the latter an arrangement impossible in mountainous Palestine, as regards the land-measurements (*id. Proleg.* p. 159, following Gramberg and Graf), and clearly deriving from some such country as Babylonia or Persia. As to the high-priest principle in Babylon and Assyria, see Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 59-61; Jastrow, as cited, p. 658.

Of the general effect of such contacts we have clear traces in two of the most remarkable of the later books of the Old Testament, Job and Ecclesiastes, both of which clearly belong to a late period in religious development. The majority of the critics still confidently describe Job as an original Hebrew work, mainly on the ground, apparently, that it shows no clear marks of translation, though its names and its local colour are all non-Jewish. In any case it represents, for its time, a cosmopolitan culture, and contains the work of more than one hand, the prologue and epilogue being probably older than the rest; while much of the dialogue is obviously late interpolation.



Compare Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 1887, p. 72; Bradley, *Lectures on Job*, p. 171; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, § 268 (291), ed. 1878, p. 542; Driver, *Introd.* pp. 405-8; Cornill, *Einleit. in das alte Test.* 2te. Aufl. 1892, §§ 38, 42; Sharpe, *Hist. of the Hebrew Nation*, 4th ed. p. 282 sq.; Dillon, *Skeptics of the Old Test.* 1895, pp. 36-39. Renan's dating of the book six or seven centuries before Ecclesiastes (*L'Ecclesiaste*, p. 26; *Job*, pp. xv-xliii) is oddly uncritical. It must clearly be dated after Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Dillon, as cited); and Cornill even ascribes it to the fourth or third century B.C. Dr. Cheyne notes that in the skeptical passages the name Yahweh is very seldom used (only once or twice, as in xii, 9; xxviii, 28); and Dr. Driver admits that the whole book not only abounds in Aramaic words, but has a good many "explicable only from the Arabic." Other details in the book suggest the possible culture-influence of the Himyarite Arabs, who had reached a high civilization before 500 B.C. Dr. Driver's remark that "the thoughts are thoroughly Hebraic" burkes the entire problem as to the manifest innovation the book makes in Hebrew thought and literary method alike. Sharpe (p. 287) is equally arbitrary. Cp. Renan, *Job*, 1859, pp. xxv, where the newness of the whole treatment is admitted.

Dr. Dillon (pp. 43-59), following Bickell, has pointed out more or less convincingly the many interpolations made in the book after, and even before, the making of the Septuagint translation, which originally lacked 400 lines of the matter in the present Hebrew version. The discovery of the Saidic version of the LXX text of Job decides the main fact. (See Professor Bickell's *Das Buch Job*, 1894.) "It is quite possible even now to point out, by the help of a few disjointed fragments still preserved, the position, and to divine the sense, of certain spiteful and defiant passages, which, in the interest of 'religion and morals,' were remorselessly suppressed; to indicate others which were split up and transposed; and to distinguish many prolix discourses, feeble or powerful word-pictures, and trite commonplaces, which were deliberately inserted later on, for the sole purpose of toning down the most audacious piece of rationalistic philosophy which has ever yet been clothed in the music of sublime verse" (Dillon, pp. 45-46).

"Besides the four hundred verses which must be excluded on the ground that they are wanting in the Septuagint version, and were therefore added to the text at a comparatively recent period, the long-winded discourse of Elihu must be struck out, most [?] much] of which was composed before the book was first translated into Greek.....In the prologue in prose..... Elihu is not once alluded to; and in the epilogue, where all the [other] debaters are named and censured, he.....is absolutely ignored.....Elihu's style is *toto cælo* different from that of the

other parts of the poem;.....while his doctrinal peculiarities, particularly his mention of interceding angels, while they coincide with those of the New Testament, are absolutely unknown to Job and his friends.....The confusion introduced into the text by this insertion is bewildering in the extreme; and yet the result is but a typical specimen of the.....tangle which was produced by the systematic endeavour of later and pious editors to reduce the poem to the proper level of orthodoxy" (*id.* pp. 55-57). Again: "Ch. xxiv, 5-8, 10-24, and ch. xxx, 3-7, take the place of Job's blasphemous complaint about the unjust government of the world."

It need hardly be added here that not only the Authorized but the Revised Version is false in the text "I know that my redeemer liveth," etc. (xix, 25-27), that being a perversion dating from Jerome. The probable meaning is given in Dr. Dillon's version:—

But I know that my avenger liveth;  
Though it be at the end upon my dust,  
My witness will avenge these things,  
And a curse alight upon mine enemies.

The original expressed a complete disbelief in a future life (ch. xiv). Compare Dr. Dillon's rhythmic version of the restored text.

What marks off the book of Job from all other Hebrew literature is its dramatic and reflective handling of the ethical problem of theism, which the prophets either evade or dismiss by declamation against Jewish sins. Not that it is solved in Job, where the rôle of Satan is an inconclusive resort to the Persian dualistic solution, and where the deity is finally made to answer Job's freethinking by sheer literary thunder, much less ratiocinative though far more artistic than the theistic speeches of the friends. But at least the writer or writers of Job's speeches consciously grasped the issue; and the writer of the epilogue evidently felt that the least Yahweh could do was to compensate a man whom he had allowed to be wantonly persecuted. The various efforts of ancient thought to solve the same problem will be found to constitute the motive power in many later heterodox systems, theistic and atheistic.

Broadly speaking, it is solved in practice in terms of the fortunes of priests and worshippers. At all stages of religious evolution extreme ill-fortune tends to detach men from the cults that have failed to bring them succour. Be it in the case of African indigenes slaying their unsuccessful rain-doctor, Anglo-Saxon priests welcoming Christianity as a surer source of income than their old worship, pagans turning Christian at the fall of Julian, or Christians going



over to Islam at the sight of its triumph—the simple primary motive of self-interest is always potent on this as on other sides; and at all stages of Jewish history, it is evident, there were many who held by Yahweh because they thought he prospered them, or renounced him because he did not. And the very vicissitude of things would breed a general skepticism.<sup>1</sup> In Zephaniah (i, 12) there is a specific allusion to those “that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.”

Judaism is thus historically a series of socio-political selections rather than a sequence of hereditary transmission. The first definite and exclusive Yahwistic cult was an outcome of special political conditions; and its priests would adhere to it in adversity insofar as they had no other economic resort. Every return of sunshine, on the other hand, would minister to faith; and while many Jews in the time of Assyro-Babylonian ascendancy decided that Yahweh could not save, those Yahwists who in the actual Captivity prospered commercially in the new life would see in such prosperity a fresh proof of Yahweh's support,<sup>2</sup> and would magnify his name and endow his priests accordingly. For similar reasons, the most intense development of Judaism occurs after the Maccabean revolt, when the military triumph of the racial remnant over its oppressors inspired a new and enduring enthusiasm.

On the other hand, foreign influences would chronically tend to promote doubt, especially where the foreigner was not a mere successful votary exalting his own God, but a sympathetic thinker questioning all the Godisms alike. This consideration is a reason the more for surmising a partly foreign source for the book of Job, where, as in the passage cited from Zephaniah, there is no thought of one deity being less potent than another, but rather an impeachment of divine rule in terms of a conceptual monotheism. In any case, the book stands for more than Jewish reverie; and where it is finally turned to an irrelevant and commonplace reaffirmation of the goodness of deity, a certain number of sincerer thinkers in all likelihood fell back on an “agnostic” solution of the eternal problem.

In certain aspects the book of Job speaks for a further reach of early freethinking than is seen in Ecclesiastes (Koheleth), which, however, at its lower level of conviction, tells of an unbelief that could not be overborne by any rhetoric. It unquestionably derives from late foreign influences. It is true that even in the book of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Rowland Williams, *The Hebrew Prophets*, ii (1871), 38. This translator's rendering of the phrase cited by Zephaniah runs: “Neither good does the eternal nor evil.”  
<sup>2</sup> Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii, 216.

Malachi, which is commonly dated about 400 B.C., there is angry mention of some who ask, “Where is the God of judgment?” and say, “It is vain to serve God”;<sup>1</sup> even as others had said it in the days of Assyrian oppression;<sup>2</sup> but in Malachi these sentiments are actually associated with foreign influences, and in Koheleth such influences are implicit. By an increasing number of students, though not yet by common critical consent, the book is dated about 200 B.C., when Greek influence was stronger in Jewry than at any previous time.

Grätz even puts it as late as the time of Herod the Great. But compare Dillon, p. 129; Tyler, *Ecclesiastes*, 1874, p. 31; Plumptre's *Ecclesiastes*, 1881, introd. p. 34; Renan, *L'Ecclesiaste*, 1882, pp. 54–59; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, iii, 82; Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 446–47; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 527. Dr. Cheyne and some others still put the date before 332 B.C. Here again we are dealing with a confused and corrupted text. The German Prof. Bickell has framed an ingenious and highly plausible theory to the effect that the present incoherence of the text is mainly due to a misplacing of the leaves of the copy from which the current transcript was made. See it set forth by Dillon, pp. 92–97; cp. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 273 sq. There has, further, been some tampering. The epilogue, in particular, is clearly the addition of a later hand—“one of the most timid and shuffling apologies ever penned” (Dillon, p. 118, note).

But the thought of the book is, as Renan says, profoundly fatigued; and the sombre avowals of the absence of divine moral government are ill-balanced by sayings, probably interpolated by other hands, averring an ultimate rectification even on earth. What remains unqualified is the deliberate rejection of the belief in a future life, couched in terms that imply the currency of the doctrine;<sup>3</sup> and the deliberate caution against enthusiasm in religion. Belief in a powerful but remote deity, with a minimum of worship and vows, is the outstanding lesson.<sup>4</sup>

“To me, Koheleth is not a theist in any vital sense in his philosophic meditations” (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 250). “Koheleth's pessimistic theory, which has its roots in secularism, is utterly incompatible with the spirit of Judaism. ....It is grounded upon the rejection of the Messianic expectations, and absolute disbelief in the solemn promises of Jahveh himself. ....It would be idle to deny that he had far more in

<sup>1</sup> Mal. ii, 17; iii, 13. Cp. ii, 8, 11.  
<sup>2</sup> Eccles. iii, 19–21.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Jer. xxxiii, 24; xxxviii, 19.  
<sup>4</sup> Ch. v. Renan's translation lends lucidity.



common with the 'impious' than with the orthodox" (Dillon, pp. 119-20).

That there was a good deal of this species of tired or stoical semi-rationalism among the Jews of the Hellenistic period may be inferred from various traces. The opening verses of the thirtieth chapter of the book of Proverbs, attributed to AGUR, son of Jakeh, are admittedly the expression of a skeptic's conviction that God cannot be known,<sup>1</sup> the countervailing passages being plainly the additions of a believer. Agur's utterances probably belong to the close of the third century B.C. Here, as in Job, there are signs of Arab influence;<sup>2</sup> but at a later period the main source of skepticism for Israel was probably the Hellenistic civilization. It is told in the Talmud that in the Maccabean period there came into use the formula, "Cursed be the man that cherisheth swine; and cursed be the man that teacheth his son the wisdom of the Greeks"; and there is preserved the saying of Rabbi Simeon, son of Gamaliel, that in his father's school five hundred learnt the law, and five hundred the wisdom of the Greeks.<sup>3</sup> Before Gamaliel, the Greek influence had affected Jewish philosophic thought; and it is very probable that among the Sadducees who resisted the doctrine of resurrection there were some thinkers of the Epicurean school. To that school may have belonged the unbelievers who are struck at in several Rabbinical passages which account for the sin of Adam as beginning in a denial of the omnipresence of God, and describe Cain as having said: "There is no judgment; there is no world to come, and there is no reward for the just, and no punishment for the wicked."<sup>4</sup> But of Greek or other atheism there is no direct trace in the Hebrew literature;<sup>5</sup> and the rationalism of the Sadducees, who were substantially the priestly party,<sup>6</sup> was like the rationalism of the Brahmans and the Egyptian priests—something esoteric and withheld from the multitude. In the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, which belongs to the first century A.C., the

<sup>1</sup> Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378. Prof. Dillon (*Skeptics of the Old Testament*, p. 155) goes so far as to pronounce Agur a "Hebrew Voltaire," which is somewhat of a straining of the few words he has left. Cp. Dr. Moncure Conway, *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, p. 55. In any case, Agur belongs to an age of "advanced religious reflection" (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 152).

<sup>2</sup> Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> Biscoe, *Hist. of the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. 1829, p. 80, following Selden and Lightfoot. <sup>4</sup> S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 189, citing *Sanhedrin*, 38b, and Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. iv, 8. Cp. pp. 191-92, citing a mention of Epicurus in the Mishna.

<sup>5</sup> The familiar phrase in the Psalms (xiv, 1; liii, 1), "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," supposing it to be evidence for anything, clearly does not refer to any reasoned unbelief. Atheism could not well be quite so general as the phrase, taken literally, would imply.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. W. R. Sorley, *Jewish Christians and Judaism*, 1881, p. 9; Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Ch.* ed. 1892, pp. 48-49. These writers somewhat exaggerate the novelty of the view they accept. Cp. Biscoe, *History of the Acts*, ed. 1829, p. 101.

denial of immortality, so explicit in Ecclesiastes, is treated as a proof of utter immorality, though the deniers are not represented as atheists.<sup>1</sup> They thus seem to have been still numerous, and the imputation of wholesale immorality to them is of course not to be credited;<sup>2</sup> but there is no trace of any constructive teaching on their part.

So far as the literature shows, save for the confused Judaic-Platonism of Philo of Alexandria, there is practically no rational progress in Jewish thought after Koheleth till the time of contact with revived Greek thought in Saracen Spain. The mass of the people, in the usual way, are found gravitating to the fanatical and the superstitious levels of the current creed. The book of Ruth, written to resist the separatism of the post-Exilic theocracy,<sup>3</sup> never altered the Jewish practice, though allowed into the canon. The remarkable Levitical legislation providing for the periodical restoration of the land to the poor never came into operation,<sup>4</sup> any more than the very different provision giving land and cities to the children of Aaron and the Levites. None of the more rationalistic writings in the canon seems ever to have counted for much in the national life. To conceive of "Israel," in the fashion still prevalent, as being typified in the monotheistic prophets, whatever their date, is as complete a misconception as it would be to see in Mr. Ruskin the expression of the everyday ethic of commercial England. The anti-sacrificial and universalist teachings in the prophets and in the Psalms never affected, for the people at large, the sacrificial and localized worship at Jerusalem; though they may have been esoterically received by some of the priestly or learned class there, and though they may have promoted a continual exodus of the less fanatical types, who turned to other civilizations. Despite the resistance of the Sadducees and the teaching of Job and Ecclesiastes, the belief in a resurrection rapidly gained ground<sup>5</sup> in the two or three centuries before the rise of Jesuism, and furnished a basis for the new creed; as did the Messianic hope and the belief in a speedy ending of the world, with both of which Jewish fanaticism sustained itself under the long frustration of nationalistic faith before the Maccabean interlude and after the Roman conquest. It was in vain that the great teacher Hillel declared, "There is no Messiah for

<sup>1</sup> *Wisdom*, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the implications in *Ecclesiasticus*, vi, 4-6; xvi, 11-12, as to the ethics of many believers.

<sup>3</sup> Kuenen, ii, 242-43.

<sup>4</sup> Kalisch, *Comm. on Leviticus*, xxv, 8, pt. ii, p. 548.

<sup>5</sup> In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, iii, 13; iv, 1, the old desire for offspring is seen to be in part superseded by the newer belief in personal immortality.



Israel"; the rest of the race persisted in cherishing the dream.<sup>1</sup> With the major hallucination thus in full possession, the subordinate species of superstition flourished as in Egypt and India; so that at the beginning of our era the Jews were among the most superstitious peoples in the world.<sup>2</sup> When their monotheism was fully established, and placed on an abstract footing by the destruction of the temple, it seems to have had no bettering influence on the practical ethics of the Gentiles, though it may have furthered the theistic tendency of the Stoic philosophy. Juvenal exhibits to us the Jew proselyte at Rome as refusing to show an unbeliever the way, or guide him to a spring.<sup>3</sup> Sectarian monotheism was thus in part on a rather lower ethical and intellectual<sup>4</sup> plane than the polytheism, to say nothing of the Epicureanism or the Stoicism, of the society of the Roman Empire.

It cannot even be said that the learned Rabbinical class carried on a philosophic tradition, while the indigent multitude thus discredited their creed. In the period after the fall of Jerusalem, the narrow nationalism which had always ruled there seems to have been even intensified. In the Talmud "the most general representation of the Divine Being is as the chief Rabbi of Heaven; the angelic host being his assessors. The heavenly Sanhedrim takes the opinion of living sages in cases of dispute. Of the twelve hours of the day three are spent by God in study, three in the government of the world (or rather in the exercise of mercy), three in providing food for the world, and three in playing with Leviathan. But since the destruction of Jerusalem all amusements were banished from the courts of heaven, and three hours were employed in the instruction of those who had died in infancy."<sup>5</sup> So little can a nominal monotheism avail, on the basis of a completed Sacred Book, to keep thought sane when freethought is lacking.

Finally, Judaism played in the world's thought the great reactionary and obscurantist part by erecting into a dogma the irrational conception that its deity made the universe "out of nothing." At the time of the redaction of the book of Genesis this

<sup>1</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 216. Compare pp. 193-94.

<sup>2</sup> See *Supernatural Religion*, 6th ed. i. 97-100, 103-21; Mosheim, *Comm. on Christ. Affairs before Constantine*, Vidal's tr. i. 70; Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. iii, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> *Sat.* xiv, 96-106.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Horace, 1 *Sat.* v, 100.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. A. Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation after the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 1856, p. 462, citing the *Avoda Sara*, a treatise directed against idolatry! Other Rabbinical views cited by Dr. Edersheim as being in comparison "sublime" are no great improvement on the above—e.g., the conception of deity as "the prototype of the high priest, and the king of kings,"—"who created everything for his own glory." With all this in view, Dr. Edersheim thought it showed "spiritual decadence" in Philo Judæus to speak of Persian magi and Indian gymnosophists in the same laudatory tone as he used of the Essenes, and to attend "heathenish theatrical representations" (p. 372).

dogma had not been glimpsed: the Hebrew conception was the Babylonian—that of a pre-existent Chaos put into shape. But gradually, in the interests of monotheism, the anti-scientific doctrine was evolved<sup>1</sup> by way of negative to that of the Gentiles; and where the great line of Ionian thinkers passed on to the modern world the developed conception of an eternal universe,<sup>2</sup> Judaism passed on through Christianity, as well as in its own "philosophy," the contrary dogma, to bar the way of later science.

<sup>1</sup> See Ps. xc, 2; Prov. viii, 22, 26.

<sup>2</sup> This is seen persisting in the lore of the Neo-Platonist writer Sallustius Philosophus 4th c.), *De Diis et Mundo*, c. 7, though quite unscientifically held.



## CHAPTER V

### FREETHOUGHT IN GREECE

THE highest of all the ancient civilizations, that of Greece, was naturally the product of the greatest possible complex of culture-forces;<sup>1</sup> and its rise to pre-eminence begins after the contact of the Greek settlers in Æolia and Ionia with the higher civilizations of Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup> The great Homeric epos itself stands for the special conditions of Æolic and Ionic life in those colonies;<sup>3</sup> even Greek religion, spontaneous as were its earlier growths, was soon influenced by those of the East;<sup>4</sup> and Greek philosophy and art alike draw their first inspirations from Eastern contact.<sup>5</sup> Whatever reactions we may make against the tradition of Oriental origins,<sup>6</sup> it is clear that the higher civilization of antiquity had Oriental (including in that term Egyptian) roots.<sup>7</sup> At no point do we find a "pure" Greek civilization. Alike the "Mycenæan" and the "Minoan" civilizations, as recovered for us by modern excavators, show a composite basis, in which the East is implicated.<sup>8</sup> And in the historic period the connection remains obvious. It matters not whether we hold the Phrygians and Karians of history to have been originally an Aryan stock, related to the Hellenes, and thus to have acted as intermediaries between Aryans and Semites, or to have been originally Semites, with whom Greeks intermingled.<sup>9</sup> On either view, the intermediaries represented Semitic influences, which they passed on to the Greek-speaking races, though they in turn developed

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 205, 207, 212.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 533.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. K. O. Müller, *Literature of Ancient Greece*, ed. 1847, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterth.* 2. Aufl. iii, 209-10, 252-54, 319 sq.; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* ii, 181, 365, 369, 377, 380, 535 (see also ii, 100, 102, 105, 106, 115 note, etc.); W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Lit.* 3te Aufl. p. 12; Gruppe, *Die griech. Culte und Mythen*, 1887, p. 165 sq.

<sup>5</sup> E. Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 28, 29, 35, 40, 41, 101, 203, etc.; Meyer, ii, 369.

<sup>6</sup> See the able and learned essay of S. Reinach, *Le Mirage Orientale*, reprinted from *L'Anthropologie*, 1893. I do not find that its arguments affect any of the positions here taken up. See pp. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, ii, 369; Bann, *The Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Bury, *History of Greece*, ed. 1906, pp. vi, 10, 27, 32-34, 40, etc.; Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete*, 1907, ch. ix; Maisch, *Manual of Greek Antiquities*, Eng. tr. §§ 8, 9, 10, 60; H. R. Hall, *The Oldest Civilization of Greece*, 1901, pp. 31, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Doric Race*, Eng. tr. 1830, i, 8-10; Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* 1885, i, 33; Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, 10-vol. ed. 1888, iii, 3-5, 35-44; Duncker, iii, 136, n.; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 299-310 (§§ 250-58); E. Curtius, i, 29; Schömann, *Griech. Alterthümer*, as cited, i, 2-3, 89; Burrows, ch. ix.

their deities in large part on psychological lines common to them and the Semites.<sup>1</sup>

As to the obvious Asiatic influences on historic Greek civilization, compare Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, 1872, p. 64; Von Ihering, *Vorgeschichte der Indo-Europäer*, Eng. tr. ("The Evolution of the Aryan"), p. 73; Schömann, *Griech. Alterthümer*, 2te Aufl. 1861, i, 10; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* ii, 155; A. Bertrand, *Études de mythol. et d'archéol. grecques*, 1858, pp. 40-41; Bury, introd. p. 3. It seems clear that the Egyptian influence is greatly overstated by Herodotos (ii. 49-52, etc.), who indeed avows that he is but repeating what the Egyptians affirm. The Egyptian priests made their claim in the spirit in which the Jews later made theirs. Herodotos, besides, would prefer an Egyptian to an Asiatic derivation, and so would his audience. But it must not be overlooked that there was an Egyptian influence in the "Minoan" period.

A Hellenistic enthusiasm has led a series of eminent scholars to carry so far their resistance to the tradition of Oriental beginnings<sup>2</sup> as to take up the position that Greek thought is "autochthonous."<sup>3</sup> If it were, it could not conceivably have progressed as it did. Only the tenacious psychological prejudice as to race-characters and racial "genius" could thus long detain so many students at a point of view so much more nearly related to supernaturalism than to science. It is safe to say that if any people is ever seen to progress in thought, art, and life, with measurable rapidity, its progress is due to the reactions of foreign intercourse. The primary civilizations, or what pass for such, as those of Akkad and Egypt, are immeasurably slow in accumulating culture-material; the relatively rapid developments always involve the stimulus of old cultures upon a new and vigorous civilization, well-placed for social evolution for the time being. There is no point in early Greek evolution, so far as we have documentary trace of it, at which foreign impact or stimulus is not either patent or inferrible.<sup>4</sup> In the very dawn of history the Greeks are found to be a composite stock,<sup>5</sup> growing still more composite; and the very beginnings of its higher culture are traced to the non-Grecian people of Thrace,<sup>6</sup> who worshipped the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Meyer, ii, 97; and his art. "BAAL" in Roscher's *Ausführl. Lex. Mythol.* i, 2867.

<sup>2</sup> The fallacy of this tradition, as commonly put, was well shown by Renouvier long ago—*Manuel de philosophie ancienne*, 1844, i, 3-13. Cp. Ritter, as cited below.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. on one side, Ritter, *Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 151; Renan, *Études d'hist. religieuse*, pp. 47-48; Zeller, *Hist. of Greek Philos.* Eng. tr. 1881, i, 43-49; and on the other Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 31, and the weighty criticism of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 126-27 (Eng. tr. i, 9, note 5).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Curtius, i, 125; Bury, introd. and ch. i.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Bury, as cited.

<sup>6</sup> As to the primary mixture of "Pelasgians" and Hellenes, cp. Busolt, i, 27-32; Curtius, i, 27; Schömann, i, 3-4; Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1839, i, 51-52, 116. K. O. Müller (*Doric Race*, Eng. tr. i, 10) and Thirlwall, who follows him (i, 45-47), decide that the



Muses. As seen by Herodotos and Thucydides, "the original Hellenes were a particular conquering tribe of great prestige, which attracted the surrounding tribes to follow it, imitate it, and call themselves by its name. The Spartans were, to Herodotos, Hellenic; the Athenians, on the other hand, were not. They were Pelasgian, but by a certain time 'changed into Hellenes and learnt their language.' In historical times we cannot really find any tribe of pure Hellenes in existence."<sup>1</sup> The later supremacy of the Greek culture is thus to be explained in terms not of an abnormal "Greek genius,"<sup>2</sup> but of the special evolution of intelligence in the *Greek-speaking* stock, firstly through constant crossing with others, and secondarily through its furtherance by the special social conditions of the more progressive Greek city-states, of which conditions the most important were their geographical dividedness and their own consequent competition and interaction.<sup>3</sup>

The whole problem of Oriental "influence" has been obscured, and the solution retarded, by the old academic habit of discussing questions of mental evolution *in vacuo*. Even the reaction against idolatrous Hellenism proceeded without due regard to historical sequence; and the return reaction against that is still somewhat lacking in breadth of inference. There has been too much on one side of assumption as to early Oriental achievement; and too much tendency on the other to assume that the positing of an "influence" on the Greeks is a disparagement of the "Greek mind." The superiority of that in its later evolution seems too obvious to need affirming. But that hardly justifies so able a writer as Professor Burnet in concluding (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. introd. pp. 22-23) that "the" Egyptians knew no more arithmetic than was learned by their children in the schools; or in saying (*id.* p. 26) that "the" Babylonians "studied and recorded celestial phenomena for what we call astrological purposes, *not* from any scientific interest." How can we have the right to say that no Babylonians had a scientific interest in the data? Such interest would in the nature of the case miss the popular reproduction given to astrological lore. But it might very well subsist.

Professor Burnet, albeit a really original investigator, has not here had due regard to the early usage of collegiate or corporate culture, in which arcane knowledge was reserved for the few. Thus he writes (p. 26) concerning the Greeks that "it was not

Thracians cannot have been very different from the Hellenes in dialect, else they could not have influenced the latter as they did. This position is clearly untenable, whatever may have been the ethnological facts. It would entirely negate the possibility of reaction between Greeks, Kelts, Egyptians, Semites, Romans, Persians, and Hindus.

<sup>1</sup> Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 1912, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt. II*, 583.

<sup>3</sup> The question is discussed at some length in the author's *Evolution of States*, 1912.

till the time of Plato that even the names of the planets were *known*." Surely they must have been "known" to some adepts long before: how else came they to be accepted? As Professor Burnet himself notes (p. 34), "in almost every department of life we find that the corporation at first is everything and the individual nothing. The peoples of the East hardly got beyond this stage at all: their science, such as it is, is anonymous, the inherited property of a caste or guild, and we still see clearly in some cases that it was once the same among the Hellenes." Is it not then probable that astronomical knowledge was so ordered by Easterns, and passed on to Hellenes?

There still attaches to the investigation of early Greek philosophy the drawback that the philosophical scholars do not properly posit the question: What was the early Ionic Greek society like? How did the Hellenes relate to the older polities and cultures which they found there? Professor Burnet makes justifiable fun (p. 21, *note*) of Dr. Gomperz's theory of the influence of "native brides"; but he himself seems to argue that the Greeks could learn nothing from the men they conquered, though he admits (p. 20) their derivation of "their art and many of their religious ideas from the East." If religion, why not religious speculation, leading to philosophy and science? This would be a more fruitful line of inquiry than one based on the assumption that "the" Babylonians went one way and "the" Greeks another. After all, only a few in each race carried on the work of thought and discovery. We do not say that "the English" wrote Shakespeare. Why affirm always that "the" Greeks did whatever great Greeks achieved?

On the immediate issue Professor Burnet incidentally concedes what is required. After arguing that the East perhaps borrowed more from the West than did the West from the East, he admits (p. 21): "It would, however, be quite another thing to say that Greek philosophy originated quite independently of Oriental influence."

### § 1

By the tacit admission of one of the ablest opponents of the theory of foreign influence, Hellenic religion as fixed by Homer for the Hellenic world was partly determined by Asiatic influences. Ottfried Müller decided not only that Homer the man (in whose personality he believed) was probably a Smyranean, whether of Æolic or Ionic stock,<sup>1</sup> but that Homer's religion must have repre-

<sup>1</sup> *Lit of Anc. Greece*, pp. 41-47. The discussion of the Homeric problem is, of course, alien to the present inquiry.



sented a special selection from the manifold Greek mythology, necessarily representing his local bias.<sup>1</sup> Now, the Greek cults at Smyrna, as in the other Æolic and Ionic cities of Asia Minor, would be very likely to reflect in some degree the influence of the Karian or other Asiatic cults around them.<sup>2</sup> The early Attic conquerors of Miletos allowed the worship of the Karian Sun-God there to be carried on by the old priests; and the Attic settlers of Ephesos in the same way adopted the neighbouring worship of the Lydian Goddess (who became the Artemis or "Great Diana" of the Ephesians), and retained the ministry of the attendant priests and eunuchs.<sup>3</sup> Smyrna was apparently not like these a mixed community, but one founded by Achæians from the Peloponnesos; but the general Ionic and Æolic religious atmosphere, set up by common sacrifices,<sup>4</sup> must have been represented in an epic brought forth in that region. The Karian civilization had at one time spread over a great part of the Ægean, including Delos and Cyprus.<sup>5</sup> Such a civilization must have affected that of the Greek conquerors, who only on that basis became civilized traders.<sup>6</sup>

It is not necessary to ask how far exactly the influence may have gone in the Iliad: the main point is that even at that stage of comparatively simple Hellenism the Asiatic environment, Karian or Phœnician, counted for something, whether in cosmogony or in furthering the process of God-grouping, or in conveying the cult of Cyprian Aphrodite,<sup>7</sup> or haply in lending some characteristics to Zeus and Apollo and Athênê,<sup>8</sup> an influence none the less real because the genius of the poet or poets of the Iliad has given to the whole Olympian group the artistic stamp of individuality which thenceforth distinguishes the Gods of Greece from all others. Indeed, the very creation of a graded hierarchy out of the independent local deities of Greece, the marrying of the once isolated Pelasgic Hêrê to Zeus, the subordination to him of the once isolated Athênê and Apollo—all this tells of the influence of a Semitic world in which each Baal had

<sup>1</sup> *Introd. to Scientif. Mythol.* Eng. tr. pp. 180, 181, 291. Cp. Curtius, i, 126.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Curtius, i, 107, as to the absence in Homer of any distinction between Greeks and barbarians; and Grote, 10-vol. ed. 1888, iii, 37-38, as to the same feature in Archilochos.

<sup>3</sup> Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, as cited, iii, 209-10; pp. 257, 319 sq. Cp. K. O. Müller, as last cited, pp. 181, 193; Curtius, i, 43-49, 53, 54, 107, 365, 373, 377, etc.; Grote, iii, 39-41; and Meyer, ii, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Duncker, iii, 214; Curtius, i, 155, 121; Grote, iii, 279-80.

<sup>5</sup> Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* 1885, i, 171-72. Cp. pp. 32-34; and Curtius, i, 42.

<sup>6</sup> On the general question cp. Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, pp. 151 ff., 157, 158 ff., 656 ff., 672 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Preller, *Griech. Mythol.* 2. Aufl. i, 260; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 211; R. Brown, Jr., *Semit. Influ. in Hellenic Mythol.* 1898, p. 130; Murray, *Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* p. 35; H. R. Hall, *Oldest Civilization of Greece*, 1901, p. 290.

<sup>8</sup> See Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 210, 212. Cp., again, Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 95, as to the probability that the "twelve Gods" were adjusted to the confederations of twelve cities; and again p. 126.

his wife, and in which the monarchic system developed on earth had been set up in heaven.<sup>1</sup> But soon the Asiatic influence becomes still more clearly recognizable. There is reason to hold with Schrader that the belief in a mildly blissful future state, as seen even in the *Odyssey*<sup>2</sup> and in the *Theogony* ascribed to Hesiod,<sup>3</sup> is "a new belief which is only to be understood in view of oriental tales and teaching."<sup>4</sup> In the *Theogony*, again, the Semitic element increases,<sup>5</sup> Kronos being a Semitic figure;<sup>6</sup> while Semelê, if not Dionysos, appears to be no less so.<sup>7</sup> But we may further surmise that in Homer, to begin with, the conception of Okeanos, the earth-surrounding Ocean-stream, as the origin of all things,<sup>8</sup> comes from some Semitic source; and that Hesiod's more complicated scheme of origins from Chaos is a further borrowing of oriental thought—both notions being found in ancient Babylonian lore, whence the Hebrews derived their combination of Chaos and Ocean in the first verses of Genesis.<sup>9</sup> It thus appears that the earlier oriental<sup>10</sup> influence upon Greek thought was in the direction of developing religion,<sup>11</sup> with only the germ of rationalism conveyed in the idea of an existence of matter before the Gods,<sup>12</sup> which we shall later find scientifically developed. But the case is obscure. Insofar as the *Theogony*, for instance, partly moralizes the more primitively savage myths,<sup>13</sup> it may be that it represents the spontaneous need of the more highly evolved race to give an acceptable meaning to divine tales which, coming from another race, have not a quite sacrosanct prescription, though the tendency is to

<sup>1</sup> "Even the title 'king' (*Βασις*) seems to have been borrowed by the Greek from Phrygian.....It is expressly recorded that *ῥύπαννος* is a Lydian word. *Βασις* ('king') resists all attempts to explain it as a purely Greek formation, and the termination assimilates it to certain Phrygian words." (Prof. Ramsay, in *Encyc. Brit.* art. PHRYGIA). In this connection note the number of names containing *Anax* (Anaximenes, Anaximandros, Anaxagoras, etc.) among the Ionian Greeks.

<sup>2</sup> iv, 561 sq.

<sup>3</sup> It is now agreed that this is merely a guess. The document, further, has been redacted and interpolated.

<sup>4</sup> *Prehist. Antiq. of the Aryan Peoples*, Eng. tr. p. 423. Wilamowitz holds that the verses *Od.* xi, 566-631, are interpolations made later than 600 B.C.

<sup>5</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209; Preller, p. 263.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer says on the contrary (*Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 103, Anm.) that "Kronos is certainly a Greek figure"; but he cannot be supposed to dispute that the Greek Kronos cult is grafted on a Semitic one.

<sup>7</sup> Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 54, 181. Cp. Cox, *Mythol. of the Aryan Nations*, p. 260, note. It has not, however, been noted in the discussions on Semelê that *Semlê* is the Slavic name for the Earth as Goddess. Ranke, *History of Servia*, Eng. tr. p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Iliad*, xiv, 201, 302.

<sup>9</sup> Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 367 sq.; *Ancient Empires*, p. 158. Note p. 387 in the Lectures as to the Assyrian influence, and p. 391 as to the Homeric notion in particular. Cp. W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Literatur*, § 68.

<sup>10</sup> It is unnecessary to examine here the view of Herodotos that many of the Greek cults were borrowed from Egypt. Herodotos reasoned from analogies, with no exact historical knowledge. But cp. Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 67, as to probable Egyptian influence.

<sup>11</sup> Cp. Meyer, ii, §§ 453-60, as to the eastern initiative of Orphic theology.

<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy that the traditional doctrine associated with the name of Orpheus included a similar materialistic theory of the beginning of things. Athenagoras, *Apol.* c. 19. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. anc.* i, 69-72; and Meyer, ii, 743.

<sup>13</sup> Cp. Meyer, ii, 726. As to the oriental elements in Hesiod see further Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, pp. 577, 587, 589, 593.



accept them. On the other hand, it may have been a further foreign influence that gave the critical impulse.

"It is plain enough that Homer and Hesiod represent, both theologically and socially, the *close* of a long epoch, and not the youth of the Greek world, as some have supposed. The real signification of many myths is lost to them, and so is the import of most of the names and titles of the elder Gods, which are archaic and strange, while the subordinate personages generally have purely Greek names" (Professor Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 17).

## § 2

Whatever be the determining conditions, it is clear that the Homeric epos stands for a new growth of secular song, distinct from the earlier poetry, which by tradition was "either lyrical or oracular." The poems ascribed to the pre-Homeric bards "were all short, and they were all strictly religious. In these features they contrasted broadly with the epic school of Homer. Even the hexameter metre seems not to have been used in these old hymns, and was called a new invention of the Delphic priests.<sup>1</sup> Still further, the majority of these hymns are connected with mysteries apparently ignored by Homer, or with the worship of Dionysos, which he hardly knew."<sup>2</sup> Intermediate between the earlier religious poetry and the Homeric epic, then, was a hexametric verse, used by the Delphic priesthood; and to this order of poetry belongs the *Theogony* which goes under the name of Hesiod, and which is a sample of other and older works,<sup>3</sup> probably composed by priests. And the distinctive mark of the Homeric epos is that, framed as it was to entertain feudal chiefs and their courts, it turned completely away from the sacerdotal norm and purpose. "Thus epic poetry, from having been purely religious, became purely secular. After having treated men and heroes in subordination to the Gods, it came to treat the Gods in relation to men. Indeed, it may be said of Homer that in the image of man created he God."<sup>4</sup>

As to the non-religiousness of the Homeric epics, there is a division of critical opinion. Meyer insists (*Gesch. des Alt. ii*, 395) that, as contrasted with the earlier religious poetry, "the epic poetry is throughout secular (*profan*); it aims at charming its hearers, not at propitiating the Gods"; and he further sees

<sup>1</sup> Cp. however, Bury (*Hist. of Greece*, pp. 6, 65), who assumes that the Greeks brought the hexameter with them to Hellas. Contrast Murray, *Four Stages*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 16. Cp. W. Christ, as cited, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Mahaffy, pp. 16-17.

in the whole Ionian mood a certain cynical disillusionment (*id.* ii, 723). Cp. Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 40, citing Hegel. E. Curtius (*G. G.* i, 126) goes so far as to ascribe a certain irony to the portraiture of the Gods (Ionian Apollo excepted) in Homer, and to trace this to Ionian levity. To the same cause he assigns the lack of any expression of a sense of stigma attaching to murder. This sense he holds the Greek people had, though Homer does not hint it. (Cp. Grote, i, 24, whose inference Curtius implicitly impugns.) Girard (*Le Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869), on the contrary, appears to have no suspicion of any problem to solve, treating Homer as unaffectedly religious. The same view is taken by Prof. Paul Decharme. "On chercherait vainement dans *l'Iliade* et dans *l'Odyssée* les premières traces du scepticisme grec à l'égard des fables des dieux. C'est avec une foi entière en la réalité des événements mythiques que les poètes chantent les légendes.....; c'est en toute simplicité d'âme aussi que les auditeurs de l'épopée écoutent....." (*La critique des traditions religieuses chez les grecs*, 1904, p. 1.) Thus we have a kind of balance of contrary opinions, German against French. Any verdict on the problem must recognize on the one hand the possibilities of naïve credulity in an unlettered age, and on the other the probability of critical perception on the part of a great poet. I have seen both among Boers in South Africa. On the general question of the mood of the Homeric poems compare Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 1912, p. 77, and *Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 34, 35; and A. Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece in Relation to the Character of its People*, 1898, pp. 29-30.

Still, it cannot be said that in the *Iliad* there is any clear hint of religious skepticism, though the Gods are so wholly in the likeness of men that the lower deities fight with heroes and are worsted, while Zeus and Hêrê quarrel like any earthly couple. In the *Odyssey* there is a bare hint of possible speculation in the use of the word *atheos*; but it is applied only in the phrase *οὐκ ἄθεος*, "not without a God,"<sup>1</sup> in the sense of similar expressions in other passages and in the *Iliad*.<sup>2</sup> The idea was that sometimes the Gods directly meddled. When Odysseus accuses the suitors of not dreading the Gods,<sup>3</sup> he has no thought of accusing them of unbelief.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xviii, 352.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* vi, 240; *Il.* v, 185.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* xxii, 39.

<sup>4</sup> In *Od.* xiv, 18, *αὐτῶν* means not "opposed to the Gods," but "God-like," in the ordinary Homeric sense of noble-looking or richly attired, as men in the presence of the Gods. Cp. vi, 241. Yet a Scholiast on a former passage took it in the sense of God-opposing. Clarke's ed. *in loc.* Liddell and Scott give no use of *ἄθεος*, in the sense of denying the Gods, before Plato (*Apol.* 26 C, etc.), or in the sense of ungodly before Pindar (*P.* iv, 288) and Æschylus (*Eumen.* 151). For Sophocles it has the force of "God-forsaken" — *Oedip. Tyr.* 254 (245), 661 (640), 1360 (1326). Cp. *Electra*, 1181 (1162). But already before Plato we find the terms *ἄπιστος* and *ἄθεος*, "faithless" or "infidel" and "atheist," used as terms of moral aspersion, quite in the Christian manner (Euripides, *Helena*, 1147), where there is no question of incredulity.



Homer has indeed been supposed to have exercised a measure of relative freethought in excluding from his song the more offensive myths about the Gods,<sup>1</sup> but such exclusion may be sufficiently explained on the score that the epopees were chanted in aristocratic dwellings, in the presence of womenkind, without surmising any process of doubt on the poet's part.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that such a free treatment of things hitherto sacred should not only affect the attitude of the lay listener towards the current religion, but should react on the religious consciousness. God-legends so fully thrust on secular attention were bound to be discussed; and in the adaptations of myth for liturgical purposes by STESICHOROS (fl. circa 600 B.C.) we appear to have the first open trace of a critical revolt in the Greek world against immoral or undignified myths.<sup>2</sup> In his work, it is fair to say, we see "the beginning of rationalism": "the decisive step is taken: once the understanding criticizes the sanctified tradition, it raises itself to be the judge thereof; no longer the common tradition but the individual conviction is the ground of religious belief."<sup>3</sup> Religious, indeed, the process still substantially is. It is to preserve the credit of Helena as a Goddess that Stesichoros repudiates the Homeric account of her,<sup>4</sup> somewhat in the spirit in which the framers of the Hesiodic theogony manipulated the myths without rejecting them, or the Hebrew redactors tampered with their text. But in Stesichoros there is a new tendency to reject the myth altogether;<sup>5</sup> so that at this stage freethought is still part of a process in which religious feeling, pressed by an advancing ethical consciousness, instinctively clears its standing ground.

It is in Pindar, however (518-442 B.C.), that we first find such a mental process plainly avowed by a believer. In his first Olympic Ode he expressly declares the need for bringing afterthought to bear on poetic lore, that so men may speak nought unfitting of the Gods; and he protests that he will never tell the tale of the blessed ones banqueting on human flesh.<sup>6</sup> In the ninth Ode he again protests that his lips must not speak blasphemously of such a thing as strife among the immortals.<sup>7</sup> Here the critical

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 2nd ed. i, 14-15, and cit. there from Professor Jebb.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii, 724-27; Grote, as cited, i, 279-81.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer, ii, 724, 727.

<sup>4</sup> The tradition is confused. Stesichoros is said first to have aspersed Helen, whereupon she, as Goddess, struck him with blindness: thereafter he published a retraction, in which he declared that she had never been at Troy, an *eidolon* or phantasm taking her name; and on this his sight was restored. We can but divine through the legend the probable reality, the documents being lost. See Grote, as cited, for the details. For the eulogies of Stesichoros by ancient writers, see Girard, *Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869, pp. 175-79.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Meyer (1901), iii, § 244.

<sup>6</sup> *Ol.* i, 42-57, 80-85.

<sup>7</sup> *Ol.* ix, 54-61.

motive is ethical, though, while repudiating one kind of scandal about the Gods, Pindar placidly accepts others no less startling to the modern sense. His critical revolt, in fact, is far from thoroughgoing, and suggests rather a religious man's partial response to pressure from others than any independent process of reflection.<sup>1</sup>

"He [Pindar] was honestly attached to the national religion and to its varieties in old local cults. He lived a somewhat sacerdotal life, labouring in honour of the Gods, and seeking to spread a reverence for old traditional beliefs. He, moreover, shows an acquaintance with Orphic rites and Pythagorean mysteries, which led him to preach the doctrine of immortality, and of rewards and punishments in the life hereafter. [Note.—The most explicit fragment (*θρηνοι*, 3), is, however, not considered genuine by recent critics.] .....He is indeed more affected by the advance of freethinking than he imagines; he borrows from the neologians the habit of rationalizing myths, and explaining away immoral acts and motives in the Gods; but these things are isolated attempts with him, and have no deep effect upon his general thinking" (Mahaffy, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* i, 213-14).

For such a development we are not, of course, forced to assume a foreign influence: mere progress in refinement and in mental activity could bring it about; yet none the less it is probable that foreign influence did quicken the process. It is true that from the beginnings of the literary period Greek thought played with a certain freedom on myth, partly perhaps because the traditions visibly came from various races, and there was no strong priesthood to ossify them. After Homer and Hesiod, men looked back to those poets as shaping theology to their own minds.<sup>2</sup> But all custom is conservative, and Pindar's mind had that general cast. On the other hand, external influence was forthcoming. The period of Pindar and Æschylus [525-455 B.C.] follows on one in which Greek thought, stimulated on all sides, had taken the first great stride in its advance beyond all antiquity. Egypt had been fully thrown open to the Greeks in the reign of Psammetichos<sup>3</sup> (650 B.C.); and a great historian, who contends that the "sheer inherent and expansive force" of "the" Greek intellect, "aided but by no means either impressed or provoked from without," was the true cause, yet concedes that intercourse with Egypt "enlarged the range of

<sup>1</sup> He dedicated statues to Zeus, Apollo, and Hermes. Pausanias, ix, 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Herodot. ii, 53.

<sup>3</sup> A ruler of Libyan stock, and so led by old Libyan connections to make friends with Greeks. He reigned over fifty years, and the Greek connection grew very close. Curtius, i, 344-45. Cp. Grote, i, 144-55.



their thoughts and observations, while it also imparted to them that vein of mysticism which overgrew the primitive simplicity of the Homeric religion," and that from Asia Minor in turn they had derived "musical instruments and new laws of rhythm and melody," as well as "violent and maddening religious rites."<sup>1</sup> And others making similar *a priori* claims for the Greek intelligence are forced likewise to admit that the mental transition between Homer and Herodotos cannot be explained save in terms of "the influence of other creeds, and the necessary operation of altered circumstances and relations."<sup>2</sup> In the *Persae* of Æschylus we even catch a glimpse of direct contact with foreign skepticism;<sup>3</sup> and again in the *Agamemnon* there is a reference to some impious one who denied that the Gods deigned to have care of mortals.<sup>4</sup> It seems unwarrantable to read as "ridicule of popular polytheism" the passage in the same tragedy:<sup>5</sup> "Zeus, whosoever he be; if this name be well-pleasing to himself in invocation, by this do I name him." It may more fitly be read<sup>6</sup> as an echo of the saying of Herakleitos that "the Wise [= the Logos?] is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus."<sup>7</sup> But in the poet's thought, as revealed in the *Prometheus*, and in the *Agamemnon* on the theme of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, there has occurred an ethical judgment of the older creeds, an approach to pantheism, a rejection of anthropomorphism, and a growth of pessimism that tells of their final insufficiency.

The leaning to pantheism is established by the discovery that the disputed lines, "Zeus is sky, earth, and heaven: Zeus is all things, yea, greater than all things" (Frag. 443), belonged to the lost tragedy of the *Heliades* (Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, 1896, p. 88). For the pessimism see the *Prometheus*, 247-51. The anti-anthropomorphism is further to be made out from the lines ascribed to Æschylus by Justin Martyr (*De Monarchia*, c. 2) and Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromata*, v, 14). They are expressly pantheistic; but their genuineness is doubtful. The story that Æschylus was nearly killed by a theatre audience on the score that he had divulged part of the mysteries in a tragedy (Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316; *Tragic Drama*, pp. 49-50) does not seem to have suggested to

<sup>1</sup> Grote, 10-vol. ed. 1888, i, 307, 326, 329, 413. Cp. i, 27-30; ii, 52; iii, 39-41, etc.

<sup>2</sup> K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythology*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> "Then one [of the Persians] who before had in nowise believed in [or, recognized the existence of] the Gods, offered prayer and supplication, doing obeisance to Earth and Heaven" (*Persae*, 497-99).

<sup>4</sup> *Agamemnon*, 370-72. This is commonly supposed to be a reference to Diagoras the Melian (below, p. 159).

<sup>5</sup> *Agam.* 170-72 (160-62).

<sup>6</sup> So Whittaker, *Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets*, 1911, pp. 42-43.

<sup>7</sup> So Buckley, in Bohn trans. of Æschylus, p. 100. He characterizes as a "skeptical formula" the phrase "Zeus, whoever he may be"; but goes on to show that such formulas were grounded on the Semitic notion that the true name of God was concealed from man.

Aristotle, who tells it (*Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 2), any heterodox intention on the tragedian's part; but it is hard to see an orthodox believer in the author either of the *Prometheus*, wherein Zeus is posed as brutal might crucifying innocence and beneficence, or of the *Agamemnon*, where the father, perplexed in the extreme, can but fall back helplessly on formulas about the all-sufficiency of Zeus when called upon to sacrifice his daughter. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 86 sq. "Some critics," says Mr. Haigh (p. 88), "have been led to imagine that there is in Æschylus a double Zeus—the ordinary God of the polytheistic religion and the one omnipotent deity in whom he really believed. They suppose that he had no genuine faith in the credibility of the popular legends, but merely used them as a setting for his tragedies; and that his own convictions were of a more philosophical type," as seen in the pantheistic lines concerning Zeus. To this Mr. Haigh replies that it is "most improbable that there was any clear distinction in the mind of Æschylus" between the two conceptions of Zeus; going on, however, to admit that "much, no doubt, he regarded as uncertain, much as false. Even the name 'Zeus' was to him a mere convention." Mr. Haigh in this discussion does not attempt to deal with the problem of the *Prometheus*.

The hesitations of the critics on this head are noteworthy. Karl Ottfried Müller, who is least himself in dealing with fundamental issues of creed, evades the problem (*Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 329) with the bald suggestion that "Æschylus, in his own mind, must have felt how this severity [of Zeus], a necessary accompaniment of the transition from the Titanic period to the government of the Gods of Olympus, was to be reconciled with the mild wisdom which he makes an attribute of Zeus in the subsequent ages of the world. Consequently, the deviation from right.....would all lie on the side of Prometheus." This nugatory plea—which is rightly rejected by Burckhardt (*Griech. Culturgesch.* ii, 25)—is ineffectually backed by the argument that the friendly Oceanides recur to the thought, "Those only are wise who humbly reverence Adrasteia (Fate)"—as if the positing of a supreme Fate were not a further belittlement of Zeus.

Other critics are similarly evasive. Patin (*Eschyle*, éd. 1877, p. 250 sq.), noting the vagaries of past criticism, hostile and other, avowedly leaves the play an unsolved enigma, affirming only the commonly asserted "piety" of Æschylus. Girard (*Le sentiment religieux en Grèce*, pp. 425-29) does no better, while dogmatically asserting that the poet is "the Greek faithful to the faith of his fathers, which he interprets with an intelligent and emotional (*émue*) veneration." Meyer (iii, §§ 257-58) draws an elaborate parallel between Æschylus and Pindar, affirming in turn the "tiefe Frömmigkeit" of the



former—and in turn leaves the enigma of the *Prometheus* unsolved. Professor Decharme, rightly rejecting the fanciful interpretations of Quinet and others who allegorize Prometheus into humanity revolting against superstition, offers a very unsatisfying explanation of his own (p. 107), which practically denies that there is any problem to solve.

Prof. Mahaffy, with his more vivacious habit of thought, comes to the evaded issue. "How," he asks, "did the Athenian audience, who vehemently attacked the poet for divulging the mysteries, tolerate such a drama? And still more, how did Æschylus, a pious and serious thinker, venture to bring such a subject on the stage with a moral purpose?" The answers suggested are: (1) that in all old religions there are tolerated anomalous survivals; (2) that "a very extreme distortion of their Gods will not offend many who would feel outraged at any open denial of them"; (3) that all Greeks longed for despotic power for themselves, and that "no Athenian, however he sympathized with Prometheus, would think of blaming Zeus for.....crushing all resistance to his will." But even if these answers—of which the last is the most questionable—be accepted, "the question of the poet's intention is far more difficult, and will probably never be satisfactorily answered." Finally, we have this summing-up: "Æschylus was, indeed, essentially a theologian.....but, what is more honourable and exceptional, he was so candid and honest a theologian that he did not approach men's difficulties for the purpose of refuting them or showing them weak and groundless. On the contrary, though an orthodox and pious man, though clearly convinced of the goodness of Providence, and of the profound truth of the religion of his fathers, he was ever stating boldly the contradictions and anomalies in morals and in myths, and thus naturally incurring the odium and suspicion of the professional advocates of religion and their followers. He felt, perhaps instinctively, that a vivid dramatic statement of these problems in his tragedies was better moral education than vapid platitudes about our ignorance, and about our difficulties being only caused by the shortness of our sight" (*Hist. of Greek Lit.* i, 260-61, 273-74).

Here, despite the intelligent handling, the enigma is merely transferred from the great tragedian's work to his character: it is not solved. No solution is offered of the problem of the pantheism of the fragment above cited, which is quite irreconcilable with any orthodox belief in Greek religion, though such sayings are at times repeated by unthinking believers, without recognition of their bearing. That the pantheism is a philosophical element imported into the Greek world from the Babylonian through the early Ionian thinkers seems to be the historical fact (cp. Whittaker, as last cited): that the

importation meant the dissolution of the national faith for many thinking men seems to be no less true. It seems finally permissible, then, to suggest that the "piety" of Æschylus was either discontinuous or a matter of artistic rhetoric and public spirit, and that the *Prometheus* is a work of profound and terrible irony, unburdening his mind of reveries that religion could not conjure away. The discussion on the play has unduly ignored the question of its date. It is, in all probability, one of the latest of the works of Æschylus (K. O. Müller, *Lit. of Anc. Greece*, p. 327; Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 109). Müller points to the employment of the third actor—a late development—and Haigh to the overshadowing of the choruses by the dialogue; also to the mention (ll. 366-72) of the eruption of Etna, which occurred in 475 B.C. This one circumstance goes far to solve the dispute. Written near the end of the poet's life the play belongs to the latest stages of his thinking; and if it departs widely in its tone from the earlier plays, the reasonable inference is that his ideas had undergone a change. The *Agamemnon*, with its desolating problem, seems to be also one of his later works. Rationalism, indeed, does not usually emerge in old age, though Voltaire was deeply shaken in his theism by the earthquake of Lisbon; but Æschylus is unique even among men of genius; and the highest flight of Greek drama may well stand for an abnormal intellectual experience.

In this primary entrance of critical doubt into drama we have one of the sociological clues to the whole evolution of Greek thought. It has been truly said that the constant action of the tragic stage, the dramatic putting of arguments and rejoinders, *pros* and *cons*—which in turn was a fruit of the actual daily pleadings in the Athenian dikastery—was a manifold stimulus alike to ethical feeling and to intellectual effort, such as no other ancient civilization ever knew. "The appropriate subject-matter of tragedy is pregnant not only with ethical sympathy, but also with ethical debate and speculation," to an extent unapproached in the earlier lyric and gnomic poetry and the literature of aphorism and precept. "In place of unexpanded results, or the mere communication of single-minded sentiment, we have even in Æschylus, the earliest of the great tragedians, a large latitude of dissent and debate—a shifting point of view—a case better or worse—and a divination of the future advent of sovereign and instructed reason. It was through the intermediate stage of tragedy that Grecian literature passed into the Rhetoric, Dialectics, and Ethical speculation which marked the fifth century B.C."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grote, ed. 1888, vii, 8-21. See the whole exposition of the exceptionally interesting 67th chapter.



This development was indeed autochthonous, save insofar as the germ of the tragic drama may have come from the East in the cult of Dionysos, with its vinous dithyramb: the "Greek intellect" assuredly did wonderful things at Athens, being placed, for a time, in civic conditions peculiarly fitted for the economic evocation of certain forms of genius. But the above-noted developments in Pindar and in Æschylus had been preceded by the great florescence of early Ionian philosophy in the sixth century, a growth which constrains us to look once more to Asia Minor for a vital fructification of the Greek inner life, of a kind that Athenian institutions could not in themselves evoke. For while drama flourished supremely at Athens, science and philosophy grew up elsewhere, centuries before Athens had a philosopher of note; and all the notable beginnings of Hellenic freethought occurred outside of Hellas proper.

## § 3

The Greeks varied from the general type of culture-evolution seen in India, Persia, Egypt, and Babylon, and approximated somewhat to that of ancient China, in that their higher thinking was done not by an order of priests pledged to cults, but by independent laymen. In Greece, as in China, this line of development is to be understood as a result of early political conditions—in China, those of a multiplicity of independent feudal States; in Greece, those of a multiplicity of City States, set up first by the geographical structure of Hellas, and reproduced in the colonies of Asia Minor and Magna Graecia by reason of the acquired ideal and the normal state of commercial competition. To the last, many Greek cults exhibited their original character as the *sacra* of private families. Such conditions prevented the growth of a priestly caste or organization.<sup>1</sup> Neither China nor Pagan Greece was imperialized till there had arisen enough of rationalism to prevent the rise of a powerful priesthood; and the later growth of a priestly system in Greece in the Christian period is to be explained in terms first of a positive social degeneration, accompanying a complete transmutation of political life, and secondly of the imposition of a new cult, on the popular plane, specially

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Meyer, ii, 431; K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythol.* pp. 189-92; Duncker, p. 340; Curtius, i, 384; Thirlwall, i, 200-203; Burckhardt, *Griech. Culturgesch.* 1898, ii, 19. As to the ancient beginnings of a priestly organization, see Curtius, i, 92-94, 97. As to the effects of its absence, see Heeren, *Polit. Hist. of Anc. Greece*, Eng. tr. 1829, pp. 59-63; Burckhardt, as cited, ii, 31-32; Meyer, as last cited; Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen*, 3te Aufl. i, 44 sq. Lange's criticism of Zeller's statement (*Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 124-26, note 2) practically concedes the proposition. The influence of a few powerful priestly families is not denied. The point is that they remained isolated.

organized on the model of the political system that adopted it. Under imperialism, however, the two civilizations ultimately presented a singular parallel of unprogressiveness.

In the great progressive period, the possible gains from the absence of a priesthood are seen in course of realization. For the Greek-speaking world in general there was no dogmatic body of teaching, no written code of theology and moral law, no Sacred Book.<sup>1</sup> Each local cult had its own ancient ritual, often ministered by priestesses, with myths, often of late invention, to explain it;<sup>2</sup> only Homer and Hesiod, with perhaps some of the now lost epics, serving as a general treasury of myth-lore. The two great epopees ascribed to Homer, indeed, had a certain Biblical status; and the Homerids or other bards who recited them did what in them lay to make the old poetry the standard of theological opinion; but they too lacked organized influence, and could not hinder higher thinking.<sup>3</sup> The special priesthood of Delphi, wielding the oracle, could maintain their political influence only by holding their function above all apparent self-seeking or effort at domination.<sup>4</sup> It only needed, then, such civic conditions as should evolve a leisured class, with a bent towards study, to make possible a growth of lay philosophy.

Those conditions first arose in the Ionian cities; because there first did Greek citizens attain commercial wealth,<sup>5</sup> as a result of adopting the older commercial civilization whose independent cities they conquered, and of the greater rapidity of development which belongs to colonies in general.<sup>6</sup> There it was that, in matters of religion and philosophy, the comparison of their own cults with those of their foreign neighbours first provoked their critical reflection, as the age of primitive warfare passed away. And there it was, accordingly, that on a basis of primitive Babylonian science there originated with THALES of Miletos (fl. 586 B.C.), a Phoenician by descent,<sup>7</sup> the higher science and philosophy of the Greek-speaking race.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythol.* p. 195; Curtius, i, 387, 389, 392; Duncker, iii, 519-21, 563; Thirlwall, i, 204; Barthélemy St. Hilaire, préf. to tr. of *Metaphys.* of Aristotle, p. 14. Professor Gilbert Murray, noting that Homer and Hesiod treated the Gods as elements of romance, or as facts to be catalogued, asks: "Where is the literature of religion: the literature which treated the Gods as Gods? It must," he adds, "have existed"; and he holds that we "can see that the religious writings were both early and multitudinous" (*Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* p. 62; cp. Meyer and Mahaffy as cited above, pp. 125-26. "Writings" is not here to be taken literally; the early hymns were unwritten). The priestly hymns and oracles and mystery-rituals in question were never collected; but perhaps we may form some idea of their nature from the "Homeridian" and Orphic hymns to the Gods, and those of the Alexandrian antiquary Callimachus. It is further to be inferred that they enter into the Hesiodic Theogony. (Decharme, p. 3, citing Bergk.)

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, ii, 426; Curtius, i, 390-91, 417; Thirlwall, i, 204; Grote, i, 48-49.  
<sup>3</sup> Meyer, ii, 410-14.  
<sup>4</sup> Cp. Curtius, i, 392-400, 416; Duncker, iii, 529.  
<sup>5</sup> Curtius, i, 112; Meyer, ii, 366.  
<sup>6</sup> Curtius, i, 201, 204, 205, 381; Grote, iii, 5; Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 23 (Eng. tr. i, 23).  
<sup>7</sup> Herodotos, i, 170; Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, ch. i.  
<sup>8</sup> On the essentially anti-religious rationalism of the whole Ionian movement, cp. Meyer, ii, 753-57.



It is historically certain that Lydia had an ancient and close historical connection with Babylonian and Assyrian civilization, whether through the "Hittites" or otherwise (Sayce, *Anc. Emp. of the East*, 1884, pp. 217-19; Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 63, 207; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* i, 166, 277, 299, 305-10; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. du matérialisme*, 1881, pp. 30, 37 sq. Cp. as to Armenia, Edwards, *The Witness of Assyria*, 1893, p. 144); and in the seventh century the commercial connection between Lydia and Ionia, long close, was presumably friendly up to the time of the first attacks of the Lydian Kings, and even afterwards (Herodotos i, 20-23), Alyattes having made a treaty of peace with Miletos, which thereafter had peace during his long reign. This brings us to the time of Thales (640-548 B.C.). At the same time, the Ionian settlers of Miletos had from the first a close connection with the Karians (Herod. i, 146, and above pp. 120-21), whose near affinity with the Semites, at least in religion, is seen in their practice of cutting their foreheads at festivals (*id.* ii, 61; cp. Grote, ed. 1888, i, 27, note; E. Curtius, i, 36, 42; Busolt, i, 33; and Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, i, 228). Thales was thus in the direct sphere of Babylonian culture before the conquest of Cyrus; and his Milesian pupils or successors, Anaximandros and Anaximenes, stand for the same influences. Herakleitos in turn was of Ephesus, an Ionian city in the same culture-sphere; Anaxagoras was of Klazomenai, another Ionian city, as had been Hermotimos, of the same philosophic school; the Eleatic school, founded by Xenophanes and carried on by Parmenides and the elder Zeno, come from the same matrix, Elea having been founded by exiles from Ionian Phokaia on its conquest by the Persians; and Pythagoras, in turn, was of the Ionian city of Samos, in the same sixth century. Finally, Protagoras and Demokritos were of Abdera, an Ionian colony in Thrace; Leukippos, the teacher of Demokritos, was either an Abderite, a Milesian, or an Elean; and Archelaos, the pupil of Anaxagoras and a teacher of Sokrates, is said to have been a Milesian. Wellhausen (*Israel*, p. 473 of vol. of *Prolegomena*, Eng. tr.) has spoken of the rise of philosophy on the "threatened and actual political annihilation of Ionia" as corresponding to the rise of Hebrew prophecy on the menace and the consummation of the Assyrian conquest. As regards Ionia, this may hold in the sense that the stoppage of political freedom threw men back on philosophy, as happened later at Athens. But Thales philosophized before the Persian conquest.

## § 4

Thales, like Homer, starts from the Babylonian conception of a beginning of all things in water; but in Thales the immediate

motive and the sequel are strictly cosmological and neither theological nor poetical, though we cannot tell whether the worship of a God of the Waters may not have been the origin of a water-theory of the cosmos. The phrase attributed to him, "that all things are full of Gods,"<sup>1</sup> clearly meant that in his opinion the forces of things inhered in the cosmos, and not in personal powers who spasmodically interfered with it.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that, as was surmised by Plutarch, a pantheistic conception of Zeus existed for the Ionian Greeks before Thales.<sup>3</sup> To the later doxographers he "seems to have lost belief in the Gods."<sup>4</sup> From the mere second-hand and often unintelligent statements which are all we have in his case, it is hard to make sure of his system; but that it was pantheistic<sup>5</sup> and physicist seems clear. He conceived that matter not only came from but was resolvable into water; that all phenomena were ruled by law or "necessity"; and that the sun and planets (commonly regarded as deities) were bodies analogous to the earth, which he held to be spherical but "resting on water."<sup>6</sup> For the rest, he speculated in meteorology and in astronomy, and is credited with having predicted a solar eclipse<sup>7</sup>—a fairly good proof of his knowledge of Chaldean science<sup>8</sup>—and with having introduced geometry into Greece from Egypt.<sup>9</sup> To him, too, is ascribed a wise counsel to the Ionians in the matter of political federation,<sup>10</sup> which, had it been followed, might have saved them from the Persian conquest; and he is one of the many early moralists who laid down the Golden Rule as the essence of the moral law.<sup>11</sup> With his maxim, "Know thyself," he seems to mark a broadly new departure in ancient thought: the balance of energy is shifted from myth and theosophy, prophecy and poesy, to analysis of consciousness and the cosmic process.

From this point Greek rationalism is continuous, despite reactions, till the Roman conquest, Miletos figuring long as a

<sup>1</sup> *The First Philosophers of Greece*, by A. Fairbanks, 1898, pp. 2, 3, 6. This compilation usefully supplies a revised text of the ancient philosophic fragments, with a translation of these and of the passages on the early thinkers by the later, and by the epitomists. A good conspectus of the remains of the early Greek thinkers is supplied also in Grote's *Plato and the other Companions of Sokrates*, ch. i; and a valuable critical analysis of the sources in Prof. J. Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Mat.* i, 126 (Eng. tr. i, 8, n.). Mr. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 8) and Prof. Decharme (p. 39) seem to read this as a profession of belief in deities in the ordinary sense. But cp. R. W. Mackay, *The Progress of the Intellect*, 1850, i, 338. Burnet (ch. i, § 11) doubts the authenticity of this saying, but thinks it "extremely probable that Thales did say that the magnet and amber had souls."

<sup>3</sup> Mackay, as cited, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Fairbanks, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, ch. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 3, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotos, i, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 2nd. ed. introd. § 3. To Thales is ascribed by the Greeks the "discovery" of the constellation Ursus Major. Diog. ch. 2. As it was called "Phoenike" by the Greeks, his knowledge would be of Phoenician derivation. Cp. Humboldt, *Kosmos*, Bohn tr. iii, 160.

<sup>9</sup> Diog. Laërt. ch. 3.

<sup>10</sup> On this cp. Burnet, introd. § 6.

<sup>11</sup> Herod. i, 170. Cp. Diog. Laërt. ch. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Diog. Laërt. ch. 9.



general source of skepticism. ANAXIMANDROS (610-547 B.C.), pupil and companion of Thales, was like him an astronomer, geographer, and physicist, seeking for a first principle (for which he may or may not have invented the name<sup>1</sup>); rejecting the idea of a single primordial element such as water; affirming an infinite material cause, without beginning and indestructible,<sup>2</sup> with an infinite number of worlds; and—still showing the Chaldean impulse—speculating remarkably on the descent of man from something aquatic, as well as on the form and motion of the earth (figured by him as a cylinder<sup>3</sup>), the nature and motions of the solar system, and thunder and lightning.<sup>4</sup> It seems doubtful whether, as affirmed by Eudemus, he taught the doctrine of the earth's motion; but that this doctrine was derived from the Babylonian schools of astronomy is so probable that it may have been accepted in Miletos in his day. Only by inferring a prior scientific development of remarkable energy can we explain the striking force of the sayings of Anaximandros which have come down to us. His doctrine of evolution stands out for us to-day like the fragment of a great ruin, hinting obscurely of a line of active thinkers. The thesis that man must have descended from a different species because, "while other animals quickly found food for themselves, man alone requires a long period of suckling: had he been originally such as he is now, he could never have survived," is a quite masterly anticipation of modern evolutionary science. We are left asking, how came an early Ionian Greek to think thus, outgiving the assimilative power of the later age of Aristotle? Only a long scientific evolution can readily account for it; and only in the Mesopotamian world could such an evolution have taken place.<sup>5</sup>

ANAXIMENES (fl. 548 B.C.), yet another Milesian, pupil or at least follower in turn of Anaximandros, speculates similarly, making his infinite and first principle the air, in which he conceives the earth to be suspended; theorizes on the rainbow, earthquakes, the nature and the revolution of the heavenly bodies (which, with the earth, he supposed to be broad and flat); and affirms the eternity of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burnet, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 9-10. Mr. Benn (*Greek Philosophers*, i, 9) decides that the early philosophers, while realizing that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, had not grasped the complementary truth that nothing can be annihilated. But even if the teaching ascribed to Anaximandros be set aside as contradictory (since he spoke of generation and destruction within the infinite), we have the statement of Diogenes Laërtius (bk. ix, ch. 9, § 57) that Diogenes of Apollonia, pupil of Anaximenes, gave the full Lucretian formula.

<sup>3</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, however (ii, 2), makes him agree with Thales.

<sup>4</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 9-16. Diogenes makes him the inventor of the gnomon and of the first map and globe, as well as a maker of clocks. Cp. Grote, i, 330, note.

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 158, as to Demokritos' statement concerning the Eastern currency of scientific views which, when put by Anaxagoras, scandalized the Greeks.

motion and the perishableness of the earth.<sup>1</sup> The Ionian thought of the time seems thus to have been thoroughly absorbed in problems of natural origins, and only in that connection to have been concerned with the problems of religion. No dogma of divine creation blocked the way: the trouble was levity of hypothesis or assent. Thales, following a Semitic lead, places the source of all things in water. Anaximandros, perhaps following another, but seeking a more abstract idea, posited an infinite, the source of all things; and Anaximenes in turn reduces that infinite to the air, as being the least material of things. He cannot have anticipated the chemical conception of the reduction of all solids to gases: the thesis was framed either *a priori* or in adaptation of priestly claims for the deities of the elements; and others were to follow with the guesses of earth and fire and heat and cold. Still, the speculation is that of bold and far-grasping thinkers, and for these there can have been no validity in the ordinary God-ideas of polytheism.

There is reason to think that these early "schools" of thought were really constituted by men in some way banded together,<sup>2</sup> thus supporting each other against the conservatism of religious ignorance. The physicians were so organized; the disciples of Pythagoras followed the same course; and in later Greece we shall find the different philosophic sects formed into societies or corporations. The first model was probably that of the priestly corporation; and in a world in which many cults were chronically disendowed it may well have been that the leisured old priesthoods, philosophizing as we have seen those of India and Egypt and Mesopotamia doing, played a primary part in initiating the work of rational secular thought.

The recent work of Mr. F. M. Cornford, *From Philosophy to Religion* (1912), puts forth an interesting and ingenious theory to the effect that early Greek philosophy is a reduction to abstract terms of the practice of totemistic tribes. On this view, when the Gods are figured in Homer as subject to *Moirai* (Destiny), there has taken place an impersonation of *Nomos*, or Law; and just as the divine cosmos or polity is a reflection of the earthly, so the established conception of the absolute compulsion of tribal law is translated into one of a Fate which overrules the Gods (p. 40 sq.). So, when Anaximandros posits the doctrine of four elements [he did not use the word, by the way; that comes later; see Burnet, ch. i, p. 56, citing

<sup>1</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 17-22.

<sup>2</sup> See Windelband, *Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. 1900, p. 25, citing Diels and Wilamowitz-Möllendorf. Cp. Burnet, introd. § 14.



Diels], "we observe that this type of cosmic structure corresponds to that of a totemic tribe containing four clans" (p. 62). On the other hand, the totemistic stage had long before been broken down. The "notion of the group-soul" had given rise to the notion of God (p. 90); and the primitive "magical group" had dissolved into a system of families (p. 93), with individual souls. On this prior accumulation of religious material early philosophy works (p. 138).

It does not appear why, thus recognizing that totemism was at least a long way behind in Thales's day, Mr. Cornford should trace the Ionian four elements straight back to the problematic four clans of the totemistic tribe. Dr. Frazer gives him no data whatever for Aryan totemism; and the Ionian cities, like those of Mesopotamia and Egypt, belong to the age of commerce and of monarchies. It would seem more plausible, on Mr. Cornford's own premises, to trace the rival theories of the four elements to religious philosophies set up by the priests of four *Gods* of water, earth, air, and fire. If the early philosophers "had nothing but theology behind them" (p. 138), why not infer theologies for the old-established deities of Mesopotamia? Mr. Cornford adds to the traditional factors that of "the temperaments of the individual philosophers, which made one or other of those schemes the more congenial to them." Following Dr. F. H. Bradley, he pronounces that "almost all philosophic arguments are invented afterwards, to recommend, or defend from attack, conclusions which the philosopher was from the outset bent on believing before he could think of any arguments at all. That is why philosophical reasonings are so bad, so artificial, so unconvincing."

Upon this very principle it is much more likely that the philosophic cults of water, earth, air, and fire originated in the worships of Gods of those elements, whose priests would tend to magnify their office. It is hard to see how "temperament" could determine a man's bias to an air-theory in preference to a water-theory. But if the priests of Ea the Water-God and those of Bel the God of Air had framed theories of the kind, it is conceivable that family or tribal ties and traditions might set men upon developing the theory quasi-philosophically when the alien Gods came to be recognized by thinking men as mere names for the elements.<sup>1</sup> (Compare Flaubert's *Salammô* as to the probable rivalry of priests of the Sun and Moon.) A pantheistic view, again, arose as we saw among various priest-hoods in the monarchies where syncretism arose out of political aggregations.

What is clear is that the religious or theistic basis had ceased to

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that Mr. Cornford's book, though somewhat loosely speculative, is very freshly suggestive. It is well worth study, alongside of the work of Prof. Burnet, by those interested in the scientific presentation of the evolution of thought.

exist for many educated Greeks in that environment. The old God-ideas have disappeared, and a quasi-scientific attitude has been taken up. It is apparently conditioned, perhaps fatally, by prior modes of thought; but it operates in disregard of so-called religious needs, and negates the normal religious conception of earthly government or providence. Nevertheless, it was not destined to lead to the rationalization of popular thought; and only in a small number of cases did the scientific thinkers deeply concern themselves with the enlightenment of the mass.

In another Ionian thinker of that age, indeed, we find alongside of physical and philosophical speculation on the universe the most direct and explicit assault upon popular religion that ancient history preserves. XENOPHANES of Kolophon (? 570-470), a contemporary of Anaximandros, was forced by a Persian invasion or by some revolution to leave his native city at the age of twenty-five; and by his own account his doctrines, and inferribly his life, had gone "up and down Greece"—in which we are to include Magna Graecia—for sixty-seven years at the date of writing of one of his poems.<sup>1</sup> This was presumably composed at Elea (Hyela or Velia), founded about 536 B.C., on the western Italian coast, south of Paestum, by unsubduable Phokaians seeking a new home after the Persian conquest, and after they had been further defeated in the attempt to live as pirates in Corsica.<sup>2</sup> Thither came the aged Xenophanes, perhaps also seeking freedom. He seems to have lived hitherto as a rhapsode, chanting his poems at the courts of tyrants as the Homerids did the Iliad. It is hard indeed to conceive that his recitations included the anti-religious passages which have come down to us; but his resort in old age to the new community of Elea is itself a proof of a craving and a need for free conditions of life.<sup>3</sup>

Setting out on his travels, doubtless, with the Ionian predilection for a unitary philosophy, he had somewhere and somehow attained a pantheism which transcended the concern for a "first principle"—if, indeed, it was essentially distinct from the doctrine of Anaximandros.<sup>4</sup> "Looking wistfully upon the whole heavens," says Aristotle,<sup>5</sup> "he affirms that unity is God." From the scattered

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laërt. ix, 19; Fairbanks, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotos, i, 163-67; Grote, iii, 421; Meyer, ii, § 438.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Guillaume Bréton, *Essai sur la poésie philosophique en Grèce*, 1882, pp. 23-25. The life period of Xenophanes is still uncertain. Meyer (ii, § 466) and Windelband (*Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. p. 47) still adhere to the chronology which puts him in the century 570-470, making him a young man at the foundation of Elea.

<sup>4</sup> Cousin, developed by G. Bréton, work cited, p. 31 sq., traces Xenophanes's doctrine of the unity of things to the school of Pythagoras. It clearly had antecedents. But Xenophanes is recorded to have argued against Pythagoras as well as Thales and Epimenides (Diog. Laërt. ix, 2, §§ 18, 20).

<sup>5</sup> *Metaphysics*, i, 5; cp. Fairbanks, pp. 79-80.



quotations which are all that remain of his lost poem, *On Nature* (or *Natural Things*),<sup>1</sup> it is hard to deduce any full conception of his philosophy; but it is clear that it was monistic; and though most of his later interpreters have acclaimed him as the herald of monotheism, it is only in terms of pantheism that his various utterances can be reconciled. It is clearly in that sense that Aristotle and Plato<sup>2</sup> commemorate him as the first of the Eleatic monists. Repeatedly he speaks of "the Gods" as well as of "God"; and he even inculcates the respectful worship of them.<sup>3</sup> The solution seems to be that he thinks of the forces and phenomena of Nature in the early way as Gods or Powers, but resolves them in turn into a whole which includes all forms of power and intelligence, but is not to be conceived as either physically or mentally anthropomorphic. "His contemporaries would have been more likely to call Xenophanes an atheist than anything else."<sup>4</sup>

The common verdict of the historians of philosophy, who find in Xenophanes an early and elevated doctrine of "Monotheism," is closely tested by J. Freudenthal, *Ueber die Theologie des Xenophanes*, 1886. As he shows, the bulk of them (cited by him, pp. 2-7) do violence to Xenophanes's language in making him out the proclaimer of a monotheistic doctrine to a polytheistic world. That he was essentially a pantheist is now recognized by a number of writers. Cp. Windelband, as cited, p. 48; Decharme, as cited, p. 46 sq. Bréton, *Poésie philos. en Grèce*, pp. 47, 64 sq., had maintained the point, against Cousin, in 1882, before Freudenthal. But Freudenthal in turn glosses part of the problem in ascribing to Xenophanes an acceptance of polytheism (cp. Burnet, p. 142), which kept him from molestation throughout his life; whereas Anaxagoras, who had never attacked popular belief with the directness of Xenophanes, was prosecuted for atheism. Anaxagoras was of a later age, dwelling in an Athens in which popular prejudice took readily to persecution, and political malice resorted readily to religious pretences. Xenophanes could hardly have published with impunity in Periklean Athens his stinging impeachments of current God-ideas; and it remains problematic whether he ever proclaimed them in face of the multitude. It is only from long subsequent students that we get them as quotations from his poetry; there is no record of their effect on his contemporaries. That his God-idea was pantheistic is sufficiently established by his attacks on anthropomorphism, taken in connection with his doctrine of the All.

<sup>1</sup> One of several so entitled in that age. Cp. Burnet, introd. § 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Metaph.*, as cited; Plato, *Soph.* 242 D.

<sup>3</sup> Long fragment in Athenæus, xi, 7; Burnet, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Burnet, p. 141.

Whether as teaching meant for public currency or as a philosophic message for the few, the pantheism of Xenophanes expressed itself in an attack on anthropomorphic religion, no less direct and much more ratiocinative than that of any Hebrew prophet upon idolatry. "Mortals," he wrote, in a famous passage, "suppose that the Gods are born, and wear man's clothing,<sup>1</sup> and have voice and body. But if cattle or lions had hands, so as to paint with their hands and make works of art as men do, they would paint their Gods and give them bodies like their own—horses like horses, cattle like cattle." And again: "Ethiopians make their Gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have reddish hair and blue eyes; so also they conceive the spirits of the Gods to be like themselves."<sup>2</sup> On Homer and Hesiod, the myth-singers, his attack is no less stringent: "They attributed to the Gods all things that with men are of ill-fame and blame; they told of them countless nefarious things—thefts, adulteries, and deception of each other."<sup>3</sup> It is recorded of him further that, like Epicurus, he absolutely rejected all divination.<sup>4</sup> And when the Eleans, perhaps somewhat shaken by such criticism, asked him whether they should sacrifice and sing a dirge to Leukothea, the child-bereft Sea-Goddess, he bade them not to sing a dirge if they thought her divine, and not to sacrifice if she were human.<sup>5</sup>

Beside this ringing radicalism, not yet out of date, the physics of the Eleatic freethinker is less noticeable. His resort to earth as a material first principle was but another guess or disguised theosophy added to those of his predecessors, and has no philosophic congruity with his pantheism. It is interesting to find him reasoning from fossil-marks that what was now land had once been sea-covered, and been left mud; and that the moon is probably inhabited.<sup>6</sup> Yet, with all this alertness of speculation, Xenophanes sounds the note of merely negative skepticism which, for lack of fruitful scientific research, was to become more and more common in Greek thought:<sup>7</sup> "no man," he avows in one verse, "knows truly anything, and no man ever will."<sup>8</sup> More fruitful was his pantheism or pankosmism.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burnet, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbanks, p. 67, Fr. 5, 6; Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, bk. v, Wilson's tr. ii, 285-86. Cp. bk. vii, c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Fairbanks, Fr. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero, *De divinatione*, i, 3, 5; Aetius, *De placitis reliquiae*, in Fairbanks, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii, 23, § 27. A similar saying is attributed to Herakleitos, on slight authority (Fairbanks, p. 54).

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* iii, 23. Anaxagoras and Demokritos held the same view. Diog. Laërt., bk. ii, ch. iii, iv (§ 8); Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosoph.* ii, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 340.

<sup>8</sup> Diog. Laërt., in life of Pyrrho, bk. ix, ch. xi, 8 (§ 72). The passage, however, is uncertain. See Fairbanks, p. 70.



"The All (ὅλος)," he declared, "sees, thinks, and hears."<sup>1</sup> "It was thus from Xenophanes that the doctrine of Pankosmism first obtained introduction into Greek philosophy, recognizing nothing real except the universe as an indivisible and unchangeable whole."<sup>2</sup> His negative skepticism might have guarded later Hellenes against baseless cosmogony-making if they had been capable of a systematic intellectual development. His sagacity, too, appears in his protest<sup>3</sup> against that extravagant worship of the athlete which from first to last kept popular Greek life-philosophy unprogressive. But here least of all was he listened to.

It is after a generation of such persistent questioning of Nature and custom by pioneer Greeks that we find in HERAKLEITOS of Ephesus (fl. 500 B.C.)—still in the Ionian culture-sphere—a positive and unsparing criticism of the prevailing beliefs. No sage among the Ionians (who had already produced a series of powerful thinkers) left a deeper impression than he of massive force and piercing intensity: above all of the gnomic utterances of his age, his have the ring of character and the edge of personality; and the gossiping Diogenes, after setting out by calling him the most arrogant of men, concedes that the brevity and weight of his expression are not to be matched. It was due rather to this, probably, than to his metaphysic—though that has an arresting quality—that there grew up a school of Herakliteans calling themselves by his name. And though doubt attaches to some of his sayings, and even to his date, there can be small question that he was mordantly freethinking, though a man of royal descent. He has stern sayings about "bringing forth untrustworthy witnesses to confirm disputed points," and about eyes and ears being "bad witnesses for men, when their souls lack understanding."<sup>4</sup> "What can be seen, heard, and learned, this I prize," is one of his declarations; and he is credited with contemning book-learning as having failed to give wisdom to Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hekataios.<sup>5</sup> The belief in progress, he roundly insists, stops progress.<sup>6</sup> From his cryptic utterances it may be gathered that he too was a pantheist;<sup>7</sup> and from his insistence on the immanence of strife in all things,<sup>8</sup> as from others of his sayings, that he was of the Stoic mood. It was

<sup>1</sup> Fairbanks, Fr. 1. Fairbanks translates with Zeller: "The whole [of God]." Grote: "The whole Kosmos, or the whole God." It should be noted that the original in Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* ix, 144) is given without the name of Xenophanes, and the ascription is modern.

<sup>2</sup> Grote, as last cited, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Fairbanks, Fr. 19. In Athenæus, x, 413.

<sup>4</sup> Polybius, iv, 40; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, viii, 126; Fairbanks, pp. 25, 27; Frag. 4, 14. Cp. 92, 111, 113.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. ix, i, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Fairbanks, Fr. 134.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* Frag. 36, 67.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* Frag. 43, 44, 46, 62.

doubtless in resentment of immoral religion that he said<sup>1</sup> Homer and Archilochos deserved flogging; as he is severe on the phallic worship of Dionysos,<sup>2</sup> on the absurdity of prayer to images, and on popular pietism in general.<sup>3</sup> One of his sayings, *ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων*,<sup>4</sup> "character is a man's dæmon," seems to be the definite assertion of rationalism in affairs as against the creed of special providences.

A confusion of tradition has arisen between the early Herakleitos, "the Obscure," and the similarly-named writer of the first century of our era, who was either one Herakleides or one using the name of Herakleitos. As the later writer certainly allegorized Homer—reducing Apollo to the Sun, Athenê to Thought, and so on—and claimed thus to free him from the charge of impiety, it seems highly probable that it is from him that the scholiast on the *Iliad*, xv, 18, cites the passage scolding the atheists who attacked the Homeric myths. The theme and the tone do not belong to 500 B.C., when only the boldest—as Herakleitos—would be likely to attack Homer, and when there is no other literary trace of atheism. Grote, however (i, 374, *note*), cites the passages without comment as referring to the early philosopher, who is much more probably credited, as above, with denouncing Homer himself. Concerning the later Herakleitos or Herakleides, see Dr. Hatch's Hibbert Lectures on *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 61, 62.

But even apart from the confusion with the late Herakleides, there is difficulty in settling the period of the Ephesian thinker. Diogenes Laërtius states that he flourished about the 69th Olympiad (504–500 B.C.). Another account, preserved by Eusebius, places him in the 80th or 81st Olympiad, in the infancy of Sokrates, and for this date there are other grounds (Ueberweg, i, 40); but yet other evidences carry us back to the earlier. As Diogenes notes five writers of the name—two being poets, one a historian, and one a "serio-comic" personage—and there is record of many other men named Herakleitos and several Herakleides, there is considerable room for false attributions. The statement of Diogenes that the Ephesian was "wont to call opinion the sacred disease" (i, 6, § 7) is commonly relegated to the spurious sayings of Herakleitos, and it suggests the last mentioned of his namesakes. But see Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures on *Indian Religion*, p. 6, for the opinion that it is genuine, and that by "opinion" was meant "religion."

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laërt. last cited. This saying is by some ascribed to the later Herakleides (see Fairbanks, Fr. 119 and *note*); but it does not seem to be in his vein, which is wholly pro-Homeric.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* ch. 2, Wilson's tr. p. 41. The passage is obscure, but Mr. Fairbanks's translation (Fr. 127) is excessively so.

<sup>3</sup> Clemens, as cited, p. 32; Fairbanks, Fr. 124, 125, 130. Cp. Burnet, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> Fairbanks, Fr. 21.



The saying, says Dr. Müller, "seems to me to have the massive, full, and noble ring of Herakleitos." It is hardly for rationalists to demur.

Much discussion has been set up by the common attribution to Herakleitos in antiquity of the doctrine of the ultimate conflagration of all things. But for this there is no ground in any actual passage preserved from his works; and it appears to have been a mere misconception of his doctrine in regard to Fire. His monistic doctrine was, in brief, that all the opposing and contrasted things in the universe, heat and cold, day and night, evil and good, imply each other, and exist only in the relation of contrast; and he conceived fire as something in which opposites were solved.<sup>1</sup> Upon this stroke of mysticism was concentrated the discussion which might usefully have been turned on his criticism of popular religion; his negative wisdom was substantially ignored, and his obscure speculation, treated as his main contribution to thought, was misunderstood and perverted.

A limit was doubtless soon set to free speech even in Elea; and the Eleatic school after Xenophanes, in the hands of his pupil PARMENIDES (fl. 500 B.C.), ZENO (fl. 464), MELISSOS of Samos (fl. 444), and their successors, is found turning first to deep metaphysic and then to verbal dialectic, to discussion on being and not being, the impossibility of motion, and the trick-problem of Achilles and the tortoise. It is conceivable that thought took these lines because others were socially closed. Parmenides, a notably philosophic spirit (whom Plato, meeting him in youth, felt to have "an exceptionally wonderful depth of mind," but regarded as a man to be feared as well as revered),<sup>2</sup> made short work of the counter-sense of not being, but does not seem to have dealt at close quarters with popular creeds. Melissos, a man of action, who led a successful sally to capture the Athenian fleet,<sup>3</sup> was apparently the most pronounced freethinker of the three named,<sup>4</sup> in that he said of the Gods "there was no need to define them, since there was no knowledge of them."<sup>5</sup> Such utterance could not be carried far in any Greek community; and there lacked the spirit of patient research which

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burnet, pp. 175-90.

<sup>2</sup> *Theaetetus*, 180 D. See good estimates of Parmenides in Benn's *Greek Philosophers*, i, 17-19, and *Philosophy of Greece in Relation to the Character of its People*, pp. 83-95; in J. A. Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed. 1893, vol. i, ch. 6; and in Zeller, i, 580 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Benn finally gives very high praise to Melissos (*Philos. of Greece*, pp. 91-92); as does Prof. Burnet (*Early Gr. Philos.* p. 378). He held strongly by the Ionian conception of the eternity of matter. Fairbanks, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ix. ch. iv, 3 (§ 24).

might have fruitfully developed the notable hypothesis of Parmenides that the earth is spherical in form.<sup>1</sup> But he too was a loose guesser, adding categories of fire and earth and heat and cold to the formative and material "principles" of his predecessors; and where he divagated weaker minds could not but lose themselves. From Melissos and Parmenides there is accordingly a rapid descent in philosophy to professional verbalism, popular life the while proceeding on the old levels.

It was in this epoch of declining energy and declining freedom that there grew up the nugatory doctrine, associated with the Eleatic school,<sup>2</sup> that the only realities are mental,<sup>3</sup> a formula which eluded at once the problems of Nature and the crudities of religion, and so made its fortune with the idle educated class. Meant to support the cause of reason, it was soon turned, as every slackly-held doctrine must be, to a different account. In the hands of Plato it developed into the doctrine of ideas, which in the later Christian world was to play so large a part, as "Realism," in checking scientific thought; and in Greece it fatally fostered the indolent evasion of research in physics.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately this made for supernaturalism, which had never been discarded by the main body even of rationalizing thinkers.<sup>5</sup> Thus the geographer and historian HEKATAIOS of Miletos (fl. 500 B.C.), living at the great centre of rationalism, while rejecting the mass of Greek fables as "ridiculous," and proceeding in a fashion long popular to translate them into historical facts, yet affected, in the poetic Greek fashion, to be of divine descent.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he held by such fables as that of the floating island in the Nile and that of the supernormal Hyperboreans. This blending of old and new habits of mind is indeed perhaps the strongest ground for affirming the genuineness of his fragments, which has been disputed.<sup>7</sup> But from his time forward there are many signs of a broad movement of criticism, doubt, inquiry, and reconstruction, involving an extensive discussion of historical as well as religious tradition.<sup>8</sup> There had begun, in short, for the rapidly-developing Greeks, a "discovery of man" such as is ascribed in later times to the age of the Italian Renaissance. In the next generation came the father of humanists, Herodotos, who

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laërt. ix, 3 (§ 21).

<sup>2</sup> As to this see Windelband, *Hist. Anc. Philos.* pp. 91-92.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 340.

<sup>4</sup> "The difference between the Ionians and Eleatæ was this: the former endeavoured to trace an idea among phenomena by aid of observation; the latter evaded the difficulty by dogmatically asserting the objective existence of an idea" (Mackay, as last cited).

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Mackay, i, 352-53, as to the survival of veneration of the heavenly bodies in the various schools.

<sup>6</sup> Grote, i, 350.

<sup>7</sup> Meyer, ii, 9, 759 (§§ 5, 465).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* §§ 6, 466.



implicitly carries the process of discrimination still further than did Hekataios; while Sophocles [496–405 B.C.], without ever challenging popular faith, whether implicitly as did Æschylus, or explicitly as did Euripides, "brought down the drama from the skies to the earth; and the drama still follows the course which Sophocles first marked out for it. It was on the Gods, the struggles of the Gods, and on destiny that Æschylus dwelt; it is with man that Sophocles is concerned."<sup>1</sup>

Still, there was only to be a partial enlightenment of the race, such as we have seen occurring, perhaps about the same period, in India. Sophocles, even while dramatizing the cruel consequences of Greek religion, never made any sign of being delivered from the ordinary Greek conceptions of deity, or gave any help to wiser thought. The social difference between Greece and the monarchic civilizations was after all only one of degree: there, as elsewhere, the social problem was finally unsolved; and the limits to Greek progress were soon approached. But the evolution went far in many places, and it is profoundly interesting to trace it.

### § 5

Compared with the early Milesians and with Xenophanes, the elusive PYTHAGORAS (fl. 540–510 B.C.) is not so much a rationalistic as a theosophic freethinker; but to freethought his name belongs insofar as the system connected with it did rationalize, and discarded mythology. If the biographic data be in any degree trustworthy, it starts like Milesian speculation from oriental precedents.<sup>2</sup> Pythagoras was of Samos in the Ægean; and the traditions have it that he was a pupil of Pherekydes the Syrian, and that before settling at Krôton, in Italy, he travelled in Egypt, and had intercourse with the Chaldean Magi. Some parts of the Pythagorean code of life, at least, point to an eastern derivation.

The striking resemblance between the doctrine and practice of the Pythagoreans and those of the Jewish Essenes has led Zeller to argue (*Philos. der Griechen*, Th. iii, Abth. 2) that the latter were a branch of the former. Bishop Lightfoot, on the other hand, noting that the Essenes did not hold the specially prominent Pythagorean doctrines of numbers and of the transmigration of souls, traces Essenism to Zoroastrian influence (Ed. of *Colossians*, App. on the Essenes, pp. 150–51; rep. in *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, 1892, pp. 369–72). This

<sup>1</sup> Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* 1886, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Meyer, ii, § 502, as to the close resemblances between Pythagoreanism and Orphicism.

raises the issue whether both Pythagoreanism and Essenism were not of Persian derivation; and Dr. Schürer (*Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. ii, p. 218) pronounces in favour of an oriental origin for both. The new connection between Persia and Ionia just at or before the time of Pythagoras (fl. 530 B.C.) squares with this view; but it is further to be noted that the phenomenon of monasticism, common to Pythagoreans and Essenes, arises in Buddhism about the Pythagorean period; and as it is hardly likely that Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. reached Asia Minor, there remains the possibility of some special diffusion of the new ideal from the Babylonian sphere after the conquest by Cyrus, there being no trace of a Persian monastic system. The resemblances to Orphicism likewise suggest a Babylonian source, as does the doctrine of numbers, which is not Zoroastrian. As to Buddhism, the argument for a Buddhist origin of Essenism shortly before our era (cp. A. Lillie, *Buddhism in Christendom* and *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*; E. Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah; or, Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians*—all three to be read with much caution) does not meet the case of the Pythagorean precedents for Essenism. Prof. Burnet (*Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. p. 102) notes close Indian parallels to Pythagoreanism, but overlooks the intermediate Persian parallels, and falls back very unnecessarily on the bald notion that "the two systems were independently evolved from the same primitive systems."

As regards the mystic doctrine that numbers are, as it were, the moving principle in the cosmos—another thesis not unlikely to arise in that Babylonian world whence came the whole system of numbers for the later ancients<sup>1</sup>—we can but pronounce it a development of thought *in vacuo*, and look further for the source of Pythagorean influence in the moral and social code of the movement, in its science, in its pantheism,<sup>2</sup> its contradictory dualism,<sup>3</sup> and perhaps in its doctrine of transmigration of souls. On the side of natural science, its absurdities<sup>4</sup> point to the fatal lack of observation which so soon stopped progress in Greek physics and biology.<sup>5</sup> Yet in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and the science of sound the school seems to have done good scientific work; being indeed praised by the critical Aristotle for doing special service in that way.<sup>6</sup> It is recorded that Philolaos, the successor of Pythagoras,

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, i, 186; ii, 535.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 145, 151, 155, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 154.

<sup>5</sup> Prof. Burnet insists (introd. p. 30) that "the" Greeks must be reckoned good observers because their later sculptors were so. As well say that artists make the best men of science.

<sup>6</sup> *Metaph.* i, 5; Fairbanks, p. 136. "It is quite safe to attribute the substance of the First Book of Euclid to Pythagoras." Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. p. 117.



was the first to teach openly (about 460 B.C.) the doctrine of the motion of the earth<sup>1</sup>—which, however, as above noted, was also said to have been previously taught by Anaximandros<sup>2</sup> (from whom some incline to derive the Pythagorean theory of numbers in general<sup>3</sup>) and by Hiketas or Iketas (or Niketas) of Syracuse.<sup>4</sup> Ekphantos, of that city, is also credited with asserting the revolution of the earth on its axis; and he too is grouped with the Pythagoreans, though he seems to have had a pantheism of his own.<sup>5</sup> Philolaos in particular is said to have been prosecuted for his teaching,<sup>6</sup> which for many was a blasphemy; and it may be that this was the reason of its being specially ascribed to him, though current in the East long before his day. In the fragments ascribed to him is affirmed, in divergence from other Pythagoreans, the eternity of the earth; and in other ways he seems to have been an innovator.<sup>7</sup> In any case, the Pythagorean conception of the earth's motion was a speculative one, wide of the facts, and not identical with the modern doctrine, save insofar as Pythagoras—or Philolaos—had rightly conceived the earth as a sphere.<sup>8</sup>

It is noteworthy, however, that in conjecturing that the whole solar system moves round a "central fire," Pythagoras carried his thought nearly as far as the moderns. The fanciful side of his system is seen in his hypothesis of a counter-earth (*Anti-chthon*) invented to bring up the number of celestial bodies in our system to ten, the "complete" number. (Berry, as cited.) Narrien (p. 163) misses this simple explanation of the idea.

As to politics, finally, it seems hard to solve the anomaly that Pythagoras is pronounced the first teacher of the principle of community of goods,<sup>9</sup> and that his adherents at Krôton formed an aristocratic league, so detested by the people for its anti-democratism that its members were finally massacred in their meeting-place, their leader, according to one tradition, being slain with them, while according to a better grounded account he had withdrawn and died at Metapontion. The solution seems to be

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laërt. *Philolaos* (bk. viii, ch. 7).

<sup>2</sup> L. U. K. *Hist. of Astron.* p. 20; A. Berry's *Short Hist. of Astron.* 1898, p. 25; Narrien's *Hist. Acc. of the Orig. and Prog. of Astron.* 1850, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> See Benn. *Greek Philosophers*, i, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Diog. Laërt. in life of *Philolaos*; Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39. Cicero, following Theophrastus, is explicit as to the teaching of Hiketas.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytos, *Ref. of all Heresies*, i, 13. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* i, 201, 205, 238-39.

<sup>6</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosoph.* iii, 13, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ueberweg, i, 49. Cp. Tertullian (*Apol.* ch. 11), who says Pythagoras taught that the world was uncreated; and the contrary statement of Aetius (in Fairbanks, pp. 146-47).

<sup>8</sup> Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* pp. 22, 25. The question is ably handled by Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 199-205.

<sup>9</sup> Diog. Laërt., viii, i, 8.

that the early movement was in no way monastic or communistic; that it was, however, a secret society; that it set up a kind of puritanism or "methodism" which repelled conservative people; and that, whatever its doctrines, its members were mostly of the upper class.<sup>1</sup> If they held by the general rejection of popular religion attributed to Pythagoras, they would so much the more exasperate the demos; for though at Krôton, as in the other Grecian colonial cities, there was considerable freedom of thought and speech, the populace can nowhere have been freethinking.<sup>2</sup> In any case, it was after its political overthrow, and still more in the Italian revival of the second century B.C., that the mystic and superstitious features of Pythagoreanism were most multiplied; and doubtless the master's teachings were often much perverted by his devotees. It was only too easy. He had laid down, as so many another moralist, that justice consisted in reciprocity; but he taught of virtue in terms of his theory of numbers<sup>3</sup>—a sure way of putting conduct out of touch with reality. Thus we find some of the later Pythagoreans laying it down as a canon that no story once fully current concerning the Gods was to be disbelieved<sup>4</sup>—the complete negation of philosophical freethought and a sharp contradiction of the other view which represented the shade of Pythagoras as saying that he had seen in Tartaros the shade of Homer hanged to a tree, and that of Hesiod chained to a pillar of brass, for the monstrous things they had ascribed to the Gods.<sup>5</sup> It must have taken a good deal of decadence to bring an innovating sect to that pass; and even about 200 B.C. we find the freethinking Ennius at Rome calling himself a Pythagorean;<sup>6</sup> but the course of things in Magna Graecia was mostly downward after the sixth century; the ferocious destruction of Sybaris by the Krotoniates helping to promote the decline.<sup>7</sup> Intellectual life, in Magna Graecia as in Ionia, obeyed the general tendency.

An opposite view of the Pythagorean evolution is taken by Professor Burnet. He is satisfied that the long list of the Pythagorean taboos, which he rightly pronounces to be "of

<sup>1</sup> The whole question is carefully sifted by Grote, iv, 76-94. Prof. Burnet (*Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. pp. 96-98) sums up that the Pythagorean Order was an attempt to overrule or supersede the State.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Burnet, p. 97, note 3. Prof. Burnet speaks of the Pythagorean Order as a "new religion" appealing to the people rather than the aristocrats, who were apt to be "freethinking." But on the next page he pictures the "plain man" as resenting precisely the religious neology of the movement. The evidence for the adhesion of aristocrats seems pretty strong.

<sup>3</sup> Fairbanks, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates*, ed. 1885, iv, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. viii, ch. i, 19 (§ 21).

<sup>6</sup> Ennius, *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, 1707, pp. 1, 4-7; Horace, *Epist.* ii, i, 52; Persius, *Sat.* vi.

<sup>7</sup> Grote, *History*, iv, 97.



a thoroughly primitive type" (p. 105), and not at all the subtle "symbols" which they were latterly represented to be, were really the lore of Pythagoras. It is not easy thus to conceive a thinker of the great Ionian age as holding by thoroughly primitive superstitions. Perhaps the solution lies in Aristotle's statement that Pythagoras was first a mathematician, and only in later life a Pherekydean miracle-monger (Burnet, p. 107, note 3). He may actually have started the symbolic view of the taboos which he imposed.

Before the decadence comes, however, the phenomenon of rationalism occurs on all sides in the colonial cities, older and younger alike; and direct criticism of creed kept pace with the indirect. About 520 B.C. THEAGENES of Rhegion, in Southern Italy, had begun for the Greeks the process of reducing the unacceptable God-stories in Homer and Hesiod—notably the battle of the Gods in the Iliad—to mere allegories of the cosmic elements<sup>1</sup>—a device natural to and practised by liberal conservatives in all religious systems under stress of skeptical attack, and afterwards much employed in the Hellenic world.<sup>2</sup> Soon the attack became more stringent. At Syracuse we find the great comic dramatist EPICHRMOS, about 470 B.C., treating the deities on the stage in a spirit of such audacious burlesque<sup>3</sup> as must be held to imply unbelief. Aristophanes, at Athens, indeed, shows a measure of the same spirit while posing as a conservative in religion; but Epicharmos was professedly something of a Pythagorean and philosopher,<sup>4</sup> and was doubtless protected by Hiero, at whose court he lived, against any religious resentment he may have aroused. The story of SIMONIDES'S answer to Hiero's question as to the nature of the Gods—first asking a day to think, then two days, then four, then avowing that meditation only made the problem harder<sup>5</sup>—points to the prevalent tone among the cultured.

### § 6

At last the critical spirit finds utterance, in the great Periklean period, at Athens, but first by way of importation from Ionia, where Miletos had fallen in the year 494. ANAXAGORAS of Klazomenai (fl. 480–450 B.C.; d. 428) is the first freethinker historically known to have been legally prosecuted and condemned<sup>6</sup> for his freethought;

<sup>1</sup> Scholiast on Iliad, xx, 67; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31); W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Literatur*, 3te Aufl. p. 63; Grote, ch. xvi (i, 374).

<sup>2</sup> K. O. Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. tr. ii, 365–68; Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, Eng. tr. ed. 1894, iii, 113.

<sup>3</sup> Grote, i, 338, note.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Philolaos, as we saw, is said to have been prosecuted, but is not said to have been condemned.

and it was in the Athens of Perikles, despite Perikles's protection, that the attack was made. Coming of the Ionian line of thinkers, and himself a pupil of Anaximenes of Miletos, he held firmly by the scientific view of the cosmos, and taught that the sun, instead of being animated and a deity as the Athenians believed, was "a red-hot mass many times larger than the Peloponnesos"<sup>1</sup>—and the moon a fiery (or earthy) solid body having in it plains and mountains and valleys—this while asserting that infinite mind was the source and introducer of all the motion in the infinite universe;<sup>2</sup> infinite in extent and infinitely divisible. This "materialistic" doctrine as to the heavenly bodies was propounded, as Sokrates tells in his defence, in books that in his day anyone could buy for a drachma; and Anaxagoras further taught, like Theagenes, that the mythical personages of the poets were mere abstractions invested with name and gender.<sup>3</sup> Withal he was no brawler; and even in pious Athens, where he taught in peace for many years, he might have died in peace but for his intimacy with the most renowned of his pupils, Perikles.

The question of the deity of the sun raised an interesting sociological question. Athenians saw no blasphemy in saying that Gê (Gaia) or Dêmêter was the earth: they had always understood as much; and the earth was simply for them a Goddess; a vast living thing containing the principle of life. They might similarly have tolerated the description of the sun as a kind of red-hot earth, provided that its divinity were not challenged. The trouble lay rather in the negative than in the positive assertion, though the latter must for many have been shocking, inasmuch as they had never been wont to think about the sun as they did about the earth.

It is told of Perikles (499–429 B.C.) by the pious Plutarch, himself something of a believer in portents, that he greatly admired Anaxagoras, from whom he "seems to have learned to despise those superstitious fears which the common phenomena of the heavens produce in those who, ignorant of their cause, and knowing nothing about them, refer them all to the immediate action of the Gods."<sup>4</sup> And even the stately eloquence and imperturbable bearing of the great statesman are said to have been learned from the Ionian master, whom he followed in "adorning his oratory with apt illustrations from physical science."<sup>5</sup> The old philosopher, however,

<sup>1</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 245, 255, 261; Diog. Laërt, bk. ii, ch. iii, 4 (§ 8).

<sup>2</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 239–45. Cp. Grote, *Plato*, i, 54, and Ueberweg, i, 66, as to nature of the *Nous* of Anaxagoras.

<sup>3</sup> Grote, i, 374; Hesychius, s.v. AGAMEMNONA; cp. Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iii, 7 (§ 11); Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 37 (21).

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* chs. 5, 8.



whom men called "Nous" or Intelligence because of the part the name played in his teaching, left his property to go to ruin in his devotion to ideas; and it is told, with small probability, that at one time, old and indigent, he covered his head with his robe and decided to starve to death; till Perikles, hearing of it, hastened to beseech him to live to give his pupil counsel.<sup>1</sup>

At length it occurred to the statesman's enemies to strike at him through his guide, philosopher, and friend. They had already procured the banishment of another of his teachers, Damon, as "an intriguer and a friend of despotism";<sup>2</sup> and one of their fanatics, Diopetides, a priest and a violent demagogue,<sup>3</sup> laid the way for an attack on Anaxagoras by obtaining the enactment of a law that "prosecutions should be laid against all who disbelieved in religion and held theories of their own about things on high."<sup>4</sup> Anaxagoras was thus open to indictment on the score alike of his physics and of his mythology; though, seeing that his contemporary Diogenes of Apollonia (who before Demokritos taught "nothing out of nothing: nothing into nothing," and affirmed the sphericity of the earth) was also in some danger of his life at Athens,<sup>5</sup> it is probable that the prosecution was grounded on his physicist teaching. Saved by Perikles from the death punishment, but by one account fined five talents,<sup>6</sup> he either was exiled or chose to leave the intolerant city; and he made his home at Lampsakos, where, as the story runs, he won from the municipality the favour that every year the children should have a holiday in the month in which he died.<sup>7</sup> It is significant of his general originality that he was reputed the first Greek who wrote a book in prose.<sup>8</sup>

Philosophically, however, he counted for less than he did as an innovating rationalist. His doctrine of *Nous* amounted in effect to a reaffirmation of deity; and he has been not unjustly described<sup>9</sup> as the philosophic father of the dualistic deism or theism which, whether from within or from without the Christian system, has been the prevailing form of religious philosophy in the modern world. It was, in fact, the only form of theistic philosophy capable of winning any wide assent among religiously biassed minds; and it is the more remarkable that such a theist should have been prosecuted

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* c. 16. The old man is said to have uttered the reproach: "Perikles, those who want to use a lamp supply it with oil."

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 4. <sup>3</sup> Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iv, 277.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. ix (§ 57), citing the *Defence of Sokrates* by Demetrius Phalereus.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* bk. ii, ch. iii, § 9 (§ 12), citing Sotion. Another writer of philosophers' lives, Hermippus (same cit.), said he had been thrown into prison; and yet a third, Hieronymus, said he was released out of pity because of his emaciated appearance when produced in court by Perikles.

<sup>7</sup> Diog. Laërt. last cit. 10 (§ 14).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* 8 (§ 11).

<sup>9</sup> Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus im Altertum*, p. 205.

because his notion of deity was mental, and excluded the divinization of the heavenly bodies.

In the memorable episode of his expulsion from Athens we have a finger-post to the road travelled later by Greek civilization. At Athens itself the bulk of the free population was ignorant and bigoted enough to allow of the law being used by any fanatic or malignant partisan against any professed rationalist; and there is no sign that Perikles dreamt of applying the one cure for the evil—the systematic bestowal of rationalistic instruction on all. The fatal maxim of ancient skepticism, that religion is a necessary restraint upon the multitude, brought it about that everywhere, in the last resort, the unenlightened multitude became a restraint upon reason and freethought.<sup>1</sup> In the more aristocratically ruled colonial cities, as we have seen, philosophic speech was comparatively free: it was the ignorant Athenian democracy that brought religious intolerance into Greek life, playing towards science, in form of law, the part that the fanatics of Egypt and Palestine had played towards the worshippers of other Gods than their own.

With a baseness of which the motive may be divided between the instincts of faction and of faith, the anti-Periklean party carried their attack yet further; and on their behalf a comic playwright, Hermippos, brought a charge of impiety against the statesman's unwedded wife, ASPASIA.<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that that famous woman cordially shared the opinions and ideals of her husband, joining as she habitually did in the philosophic talk of his home circle. As a Milesian she was likely enough to be a freethinker; and all that was most rational in Athens acknowledged her culture and her charm.<sup>3</sup> Perikles, who had not taken the risk of letting Anaxagoras come to trial, himself defended Aspasia before the dikastery, his indignation breaking through his habitual restraint in a passion of tears, which, according to the jealous Æschines,<sup>4</sup> won an acquittal.

Placed as he was, Perikles could but guard his own head and heart, leaving the evil instrument of a religious inquisition to subsist. How far he held with Anaxagoras we can but divine.<sup>5</sup> There is probably no truth in Plutarch's tale that "whenever he ascended

<sup>1</sup> Even in the early progressive period "the same time which set up rationalism developed a deep religious influence in the masses." (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 728. Cp. iii, 425; also Grote, vii, 30; and Benn, *Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, pp. 69-70.)

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Grote, v, 24; Curtius, ii, 208-209.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, as cited. Plutarch also states, however, that the only occasion on which Perikles gave way to emotion in public was that of the death of his favourite son.

<sup>5</sup> Holm (*Griechische Geschichte*, ii, 335) decides that Perikles sought to Ionise his fellow Athenians; and Dr. Burnet, coinciding (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892, p. 277), suggests that he and Aspasia brought Anaxagoras to Athens with that aim.



the tribune to speak he used first to pray to the Gods that nothing unfitted for the occasion might fall from his lips."<sup>1</sup> But as a party leader he, as a matter of course, observed the conventions; and he may have reasoned that the prosecutions of Anaxagoras and Aspasia, like that directed against Pheidias, stood merely for contemporary political malice, and not for any lasting danger to mental freedom. However that might be, Athens continued to remain the most aggressively intolerant and tradition-mongering of Hellenic cities. So marked is this tendency among the Athenians that for modern students Herodotos, whose history was published in 445 B.C., is relatively a rationalist in his treatment of fable,<sup>2</sup> bringing as he did the spirit of Ionia into things traditional and religious. But even Herodotos remains wedded to the belief in oracles or prophecies, claiming fulfilment for those said to have been uttered by Bakis;<sup>3</sup> and his small measure of spontaneous skepticism could avail little for critical thought. To no man, apparently, did it occur to resist the religious spirit by systematic propaganda: that, like the principle of representative government, was to be hit upon only in a later age.<sup>4</sup> Not by a purely literary culture, relating life merely to poetry and myth, tradition and superstition, were men to be made fit to conduct a stable society. And the spirit of pious persecution, once generated, went from bad to worse, crowning itself with crime, till at length the overthrow of Athenian self-government wrought a forlorn liberty of scientific speech at the cost of the liberty of political action which is the basis of all sound life.

Whatever may have been the private vogue of freethinking at Athens in the Periklean period, it was always a popular thing to attack it. Some years before or after the death of Perikles there came to Athens the alien HIPPO, the first specifically named atheist<sup>5</sup> of Greek antiquity. The dubious tradition runs that his tomb bore the epitaph: "This is the grave of Hippo, whom destiny, in destroying him, has made the equal of the immortal Gods."<sup>6</sup> If, as seems likely, he was the Hippo of Rhegion mentioned by Hippolytos,<sup>7</sup> he speculated as to physical origins in the manner of Thales, making water generate fire, and that in turn produce the world.<sup>8</sup> But this

<sup>1</sup> *Perikles*, ch. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Der Kleinasiatische Rationalist Herodot" is the exaggerated estimate of A. Bauer, in Ilberg's *Neue Jahrbuch für das klassische Altertum*, ix (1903), 235, following Eduard Meyer (iv, § 448), who, however (§ 447), points to the lack of scientific thought or training in Herodotos as in Thukydides. Ignorance of Nature remained a Greek characteristic.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. viii, ch. 77. Cp. viii, 20, 96; ix, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Meyer, iv, § 446, as to the inadequacy of Athenian culture, and the unchanging ignorance of the populace on matters of physical science.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Against the Stoics*, ch. 31; Simplicius, *Physica*, i, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i, 3; *De anima*, i, 2.

is uncertain. Upon him the comic muse of Athens turned its attacks very much as it did upon Socrates. The old comic poet Kratinos, a notorious wine-bibber, produced a comedy called *The Panoptai* (the "all-seers" or "all eyes"), in which it would appear that the chorus were made to represent the disciples of Hippo, and to wear a mask covered with eyes.<sup>1</sup> Drunkenness was a venial vault in comparison with the presumption to speculate on physics and to doubt the sacred lore of the populace. The end of the rule of ignorance was that a theistic philosopher who himself discouraged scientific inquiry was to pay a heavier penalty than did the atheist Hippo.

### § 7

While Athens was gaining power and glory and beauty without popular wisdom, the colonial city of Abdera, in Thrace, founded by Ionians, had like others carried on the great impulse of Ionian philosophy, and had produced in the fifth century some of the great thinkers of the race. Concerning the greatest of these, DEMOKRITOS, and the next in importance, PROTAGORAS, we have no sure dates;<sup>2</sup> but it is probable that the second, whether older or younger, was influenced by the first, who indeed has influenced all scientific philosophy down to our own day. How much he learned from his master LEUKIPPOS cannot now be ascertained.<sup>3</sup> The writings which went under his name appear to have been the productions of the whole Abderite school;<sup>4</sup> and Epicurus declared that Leukippos was an imaginary person.<sup>5</sup> What passes for his teaching was constructive science of cardinal importance; for it is the first clear statement of the atomic theory; the substitution of a real for an abstract foundation of things. Whoever were the originator of the theory, there is no doubt as to the assimilation of the principle by Demokritos, who thus logically continued the non-theistic line of thought, and developed one of the most fruitful of all scientific principles. That this idea again is a direct development from Babylonian science is not impossible; at least there seems to be no doubt that Demokritos had travelled far and wide,<sup>6</sup> whether or not he had been brought up, as the tradition goes, by Persian magi;<sup>7</sup> and that he told how the cosmic views of Anaxagoras,

<sup>1</sup> Decharme, *Critique des trad. relig.* p. 137, citing scholiast on Aristoph., *Clouds*, 96.

<sup>2</sup> See the point discussed by Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 128-29, 131-32, notes 10 and 31 (Eng. tr. i, 15, 39). Ritter and Preller say "Protagoras floret circa a. 450-430"; "Democritus natus circa a. 460 floret a. 430-410, obit. circa a. 357."

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Ueberweg, i, 68-69; Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* i, 238.

<sup>4</sup> Burnet, p. 381.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. x, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Lange, i, 10-11 (tr. p. 17); Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, i, 15; Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, § 35.

<sup>7</sup> On this also see Lange, i, 128 (tr. p. 15, note).



which scandalized the Athenians, were current in the East.<sup>1</sup> But he stands out as one of the most original minds in the whole history of thought. No Greek thinker, not Aristotle himself, has struck so deep as he into fundamental problems; though the absurd label of "the laughing philosopher," bestowed on him by some peculiarly unphilosophic mind, has delayed the later recognition of his greatness, clear as it was to Bacon.<sup>2</sup> The vital maxim, "Nothing from nothing: nothing into nothing," derives substantially from him.<sup>3</sup>

His atomic theory, held in conjunction with a conception of "mind-stuff" similar to that of Anaxagoras, may be termed the high-water mark of ancient scientific thought; and it is noteworthy that somewhat earlier in the same age EMPEDOKLES of Agrigentum, another product of the freer colonial life, threw out a certain glimmer of the Darwinian conception—perhaps more clearly attained by Anaximandros—that adaptations prevail in nature just because the adaptations fit organisms to survive, and the non-adapted perish.<sup>4</sup> In his teaching, too, the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter is clear and firm;<sup>5</sup> and the denial of anthropomorphic deity is explicit.<sup>6</sup> But Empedokles wrought out no solid system: "half-mystic and half-rationalist, he made no attempt to reconcile the two inconsistent sides of his intellectual character";<sup>7</sup> and his explicit teaching of metempsychosis<sup>8</sup> and other Pythagoreanisms gave foothold for more delusion than he ever dispelled.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, he is one of the most remarkable personalities of antiquity, moving among men with a pomp and gravity which made them think of him as a God, denouncing their sacrifices, and no less their eating of flesh; and checking his notable self-exaltation by recalling the general littleness of men. But he did little to enlighten them; and Aristotle passed on to the world a fatal misconception of his thought by ascribing to him the notion of automatism where he was asserting a "necessity" in terms of laws which he avowedly could not explain.<sup>10</sup> Against such misconception he should have provided. Demokritos, however, shunned dialectic and discussion, and founded no school;<sup>11</sup> and although his atomism was later adopted by Epicurus, it was no

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. vii, 2 (§ 34). Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-41.

<sup>2</sup> See in particular the *De principiis atque originibus* (Works, Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 649-50).

<sup>3</sup> Meyer, who dwells on his scientific shortcomings (*Gesch. des Alt. v. § 910*), makes no account of this, his vital doctrine.

<sup>4</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 189-91. The idea is not put by Empedokles with any such definiteness as is suggested by Lange, i, 23-25 (tr. pp. 33-35), and Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos. Eng. tr. i*, 62, n. But Ueberweg's exposition is illuminating.

<sup>5</sup> Fairbanks, pp. 136, 169.

<sup>6</sup> Benn, i, 28.

<sup>7</sup> See a good study of Empedokles in J. A. Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed. 1893, vol. i, ch. 7; and another in Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 163-82.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Grote, *Plato*, i, 73, and note.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-62; Lange, p. 11 (tr. p. 17).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* p. 201.

<sup>11</sup> Fairbanks, p. 205.

more developed on a basis of investigation and experiment than was the biology of Empedokles. His ethic, though wholly rationalistic, leant rather to quietism and resignation than to reconstruction,<sup>1</sup> and found its application only in the later static message of Epicurus. Greek society failed to set up the conditions needed for progress beyond the point gained by its unguided forces.

Thus when Protagoras ventured to read, at the house of the freethinking Euripides, a treatise of his own, beginning with the avowal that he offered no opinion as to the existence of the Gods, life being too short for the inquiry,<sup>2</sup> the remark got wind, and he had to fly for his life, though Euripides and perhaps most of the guests were very much of the same way of thinking.<sup>3</sup> In the course of his flight, the tradition goes, the philosopher was drowned;<sup>4</sup> and his book was publicly burned, all who possessed copies being ordered by public proclamation to give them up—the earliest known instance of "censorship of the press."<sup>5</sup> Partisan malice was doubtless at work in his case as in that of Anaxagoras; for the philosophic doctrine of Protagoras became common enough. It is not impossible, though the date is doubtful, that the attack on him was one of the results of the great excitement in Athens in the year 415 B.C. over the sacrilegious mutilation of the figures of Hermes, the familial or boundary-God, in the streets by night. It was about that time that the poet DIAGORAS of Melos was proscribed for atheism, he having declared that the non-punishment of a certain act of iniquity proved that there were no Gods.<sup>6</sup> It has been surmised, with some reason, that the iniquity in question was the slaughter of the Melians by the Athenians in 416 B.C.,<sup>7</sup> and the Athenian resentment in that case was personal and political rather than religious.<sup>8</sup> For some time after 415 the Athenian courts made strenuous efforts to punish every discoverable case of impiety; and parodies of the Eleusinian mysteries (resembling the mock Masses of Catholic Europe) were alleged against Alkibiades and others.<sup>9</sup> Diagoras, who was further charged with divulging the Eleusinian and other mysteries, and with making firewood of an image of Herakles, telling the God thus to perform his thirteenth labour by cooking

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Meyer, § 911.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, bk. ix, ch. viii, § 3 (51); cp. Grote, vii, 49, note.

<sup>3</sup> For a defence of Protagoras against Plato, see Grote, vii, 43-54.

<sup>4</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, ix, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Beckmann, *History of Inventions*, Eng. tr. 1846, ii, 513.

<sup>6</sup> Diod. Sic. xiii, 6; Hesychius, cit. in Cudworth, ed. Harrison, i, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Ueberweg, i, 80; Thukydides, v, 116. The bias of Sextus Empiricus is further shown in his account of Diagoras as moved in his denunciation by an injury to himself.

<sup>8</sup> It is told by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* ix, 53) that Diagoras is said to have invented the dithyramb (in praise of Iacchos), and to have begun a poem with the words, "All things come by the daimon and fortune." But Sextus writes with a fixed skeptical bias.

<sup>9</sup> Grote, vi, 13, 32, 33, 42-45.



turnips,<sup>1</sup> became thenceforth one of the proverbial atheists of the ancient world,<sup>2</sup> and a reward of a silver talent was offered for killing him, and of two talents for his capture alive;<sup>3</sup> despite which he seems to have escaped. But no antidote to the bane of fanaticism was found or sought; and the most famous publicist in Athens was the next victim.

The fatality of the Athenian development is seen not only in the direct hostility of the people to rational thought, but in their loss of their hold even on their public polity. For lack of political judgment, moved always by the passions which their literary culture cherished, they so mishandled their affairs in the long and demoralizing Peloponnesian war that they were at one time cowed by their own aristocracy, on essentially absurd pretexts, into abandoning the democratic constitution. Its restoration was followed at the final crisis by another tyranny, also short-lived, but abnormally bloody and iniquitous; and though the people at its overthrow showed a moderation in remarkable contrast to the cruelty and rapacity of the aristocrats, the effect of such extreme vicissitude was to increase the total disposition towards civic violence and coercion. And while the people menaced freethinking in religion, the aristocracies opposed freethinking in politics. Thus under the Thirty Tyrants all intellectual teaching was forbidden; and Kritias, himself accused of having helped Alkibiades to parody the mysteries, sharply interdicted the political rationalism of Sokrates,<sup>4</sup> who according to tradition had been one of his own instructors.

It was a result of the general movement of mind throughout the rest of the Hellenic world that freethinkers of culture were still numerous. ARCHELAOS of Miletos, the most important disciple of Anaxagoras; according to a late tradition, the master of Sokrates; and the first systematic teacher of Ionic physical science in Athens, taught the infinity of the universe, grasped the explanation of the nature of sound, and set forth on purely rationalistic lines the social origin and basis of morals, thus giving Sokrates his practical lead.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Athenagoras, *Apol.*, ch. 4; Clem. Alex., *Protrept.* ch. 2. See the documentary details in Meyer, iv, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42; iii, 37 (the last reference gives proof of his general rationalism); Lactantius, *De ira Dei*, c. 9. In calling Sokrates "the Melian," Aristophanes (*Clouds*, 830) was held to have virtually called him "the atheist."

<sup>3</sup> Diod. xiii, 6; Suidas, s.v. DIAGORAS; Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1073. It is noteworthy that in their fury against Diagoras the Athenians put him on a level of common odium with the "tyrants" of past history. Cp. Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 355.

<sup>4</sup> Grote, vi, 476-77. As to the freethinking of Kritias, see Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* ix, 54. According to Xenophon (*Memorabilia*, i, 2), Kritias made his decree in revenge for Sokrates's condemnation of one of his illicit passions. Prof. Decharme (pp. 122-24) gives a good account of him.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iv; Hippolytos, *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 8; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233-37.

Another disciple of Anaxagoras, METRODOROS of Lampsakos (not to be confounded with Metrodoros of Chios, and the other Metrodoros of Lampsakos who was the friend of Epicurus, both also freethinkers), carried out zealously his master's teaching as to the deities and heroes of Homer, resolving them into mere elemental combinations and physical agencies, and making Zeus stand for mind, and Athenê for art.<sup>1</sup> And in the *belles lettres* of Athens itself, in the dramas of EURIPIDES [480-406 B.C.], who is said to have been the ardent disciple of Anaxagoras,<sup>2</sup> to have studied Herakleitos,<sup>3</sup> and to have been the friend of Sokrates and Protagoras, there emerge traces enough of a rationalism not to be reconciled with the old belief in the Gods. If Euripides has nowhere ventured on such a terrific paradox as the *Prometheus*, he has in a score of passages revealed a stress of skepticism which, inasmuch as he too uses all the forms of Hellenic faith,<sup>4</sup> deepens our doubt as to the beliefs of Æschylus. Euripides even gave overt proof of his unbelief, beginning his *Melanippe* with the line: "Zeus, whoever Zeus be, for I know not, save by report," an audacity which evoked a great uproar. In a later production the passage was prudently altered;<sup>5</sup> but he never put much check on his native tendency to analyse and criticize on all issues—a tendency fostered, as we have seen,<sup>6</sup> by the constant example of real and poignant dialectic in the Athenian dikastery, and the whole drift of the Athenian stage. In his case the tendency even overbalances the artistic process;<sup>7</sup> but it has the advantage of involving a very bold handling of vital problems. Not satisfied with a merely dramatic presentment of lawless Gods, Euripides makes his characters impeach them as such,<sup>8</sup> or, again, declare that there can be no truth in the "miserable tales of poets" which so represent them.<sup>9</sup> Not content with putting aside as idle such a fable as that of the sun's swerving from his course in horror at the crime of Atreus,<sup>10</sup> and that of the Judgment of Paris,<sup>11</sup> he

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Cudworth, *Intellectual System*, ed. Harrison, i, 32; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233, 289; ii, 268, 292; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31); Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iii, 7 (§ 11); Grote, i, 374, 395, note; Hatch, *Infl. of Greek Ideas*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 206. Cp. Burnett, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ii (§ 22).

<sup>4</sup> "He never so utterly abandoned the religion of his country as to find it impossible to acquiesce in at least some part of traditional religion." Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* 1886, p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316.

<sup>6</sup> Above, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> "He had also acquired in no small degree that love of dexterous argumentation and verbal sophistry which was becoming fashionable in the Athens of the fifth century. Not unfrequently he exhibits this dexterity when it is clearly out of place." Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 235. Cp. Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* p. 223. Schlegel is much more censorious.

<sup>8</sup> *Ion*, 436-51, 885-922; *Andromache*, 1161-65; *Electra*, 1245-46; *Hercules Furens*, 339-47; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 35, 711-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Hercules Furens*, 344, 1341-46; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 380-91.

<sup>10</sup> *Electra*, 737-45.

<sup>11</sup> *Troades*, 969-90.



attacks with a stringent scorn the whole apparatus of oracles, divination, and soothsaying.<sup>1</sup> And if the Athenian populace cried out at the hardy opening of the *Melanippe*, he nonetheless gave them again and again his opinion that no man knew anything of the Gods.<sup>2</sup> Of orthodox protests against freethinking inquiry he gives a plainly ironical handling.<sup>3</sup> As regards his constructive opinions, we have from him many expressions of the pantheism which had by his time permeated the thought of perhaps most of the educated Greeks.<sup>4</sup>

Here again, as in the case of Æschylus, there arises the problem of contradiction; for Euripides, too, puts often in the mouths of his characters emphatic expressions of customary piety. The conclusion in the two cases must be broadly the same—that whereas an unbelieving dramatist may well make his characters talk in the ordinary way of deity and of religion, it is unintelligible that a believing one should either go beyond the artistic bounds of his task to make them utter an unbelief which must have struck the average listener as strange and noxious, or construct a drama of which the whole effect is to insist on the odiousness of the action of the Supreme God. And the real drift of Euripides is so plain that one modern and Christian scholar has denounced him as an obnoxious and unbelieving sophist who abused his opportunity as a producer of dramas under religious auspices to “shake the ground-works of religion”<sup>5</sup> and at the same time of morals;<sup>6</sup> while another and a greater scholar, less vehement in his orthodoxy, more restrainedly condemns the dramatist for employing myths in which he did not believe, instead of inventing fresh plots.<sup>7</sup> Christian scholars are thus duly unready to give him credit for his many-sided humanity, nobly illustrated in his pleas for the slave and his sympathy with suffering barbarians.<sup>8</sup> Latterly the recognition of Euripides’s freethinking has led to the description of him as “Euripides the Rationalist,” in a treatise which represents him as a systematic assailant of the religion of his day. Abating somewhat of that thesis, which imputes more of system to the Euripidean

<sup>1</sup> *Ion*, 374-78, 685; *Helena*, 744-57; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 570-75; *Electra*, 400; *Phœnissæ*, 772; *Fragm.* 793; *Bacchæ*, 255-57; *Hippolytus*, 1059. It is noteworthy that even Sophocles (*Ed. Tyr.*, 387) makes a character taunt Tiresias the soothsayer with venality.

<sup>2</sup> *Philoctetes*, fr. 793; *Helena*, 1137-43; *Bellerophon*, fr. 288.

<sup>3</sup> *Bacchæ*, 200-203. <sup>4</sup> *Helena*, 1013; *Fragm.* 890, 905, 935; *Troades*, 848-88.

<sup>5</sup> A. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, Bohn tr. p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> This charge is on a par with that of Hygiainon, who accused Euripides of impiety on the score that one of his characters makes light of oaths. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, iii, 15.

<sup>7</sup> K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 359. The complaint is somewhat surprising from such a source. The only play with an entirely invented plot mentioned by Aristotle is Agathon’s *Flower* (Aristotle, *Poetic*, ix); and such plays would not have been eligible for representation at the great festivals.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* pp. 223-24.

drama than it possesses, we may sum up that the last of the great tragedians of Athens, and the most human and lovable of the three, was assuredly a rationalist in matters of religion. It is noteworthy that he used more frequently than any other ancient dramatist the device of a *deus ex machina* to end a play.<sup>1</sup> It was probably because for him the conception had no serious significance.<sup>2</sup> In the *Alkestis* its [non-mechanical] use is one of the most striking instances of dramatic irony in all literature. The dead Alkestis, who has died to save the life of her husband, is brought back from the Shades by Herakles, who figures as a brawling bully. Only the thinkers of the time could realize the thought that underlay such a tragic-comedy.

Dr. Verrall’s *Euripides the Rationalist*, 1897, is fairly summed up by Mr. Haigh (*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, pp. 262, 265, notes): “He considers that Euripides was a skeptic of the aggressive type, whose principal object in writing tragedy was to attack the State religion, but who, perceiving that it would be dangerous to pose as an open enemy, endeavoured to accomplish his ends by covert ridicule.....His plays.....contain in reality two separate plots—the ostensible and superficial plot, which was intended to satisfy the orthodox, and the rationalized modification which lay half concealed beneath it, and which the intelligent skeptic would easily detect.” For objections to this thesis see Haigh, as cited; Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* p. 222, note; and Dr. Mozley’s article in the *Classical Review*, Nov. 1895, pp. 407-13. As to the rationalism of Euripides in general see many of the passages cited by Bishop Westcott in his *Essays in the Hist. of Relig. Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 102-27. And cp. Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, pp. 46-49; Grote, *Hist.* i, 346-48; Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 231; Murray, *Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 256, 264-66.

Over the latest play of Euripides, the *Bacchæ*, as over one of the last plays of Æschylus, the *Prometheus*, there has been special debate. It was probably written in Macedonia (cp. ll, 408, 565), whither the poet had gone on the invitation of King Archelaos, when, according to the ancient sketch of his life, “he had to leave Athens because of the malicious exultation over him of nearly all the city.” The trouble, it is conjectured, “may have been something connected with his prosecution for impiety, the charge on which Socrates was put to death a few years after” (Murray, *Euripides translated into English Rhyming Verse*, 1902, introd. essay, p. lii). Inasmuch as the play glorifies Dionysos, and the “atheist” Pentheus (l. 995)

<sup>1</sup> Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 191. Cp. Müller, pp. 362-64.

<sup>2</sup> See, however, the æsthetic theorem of Prof. Murray, *Euripides and his Age*, pp. 221-27.



who resists him is slain by the maddened Bacchantes, led by his own mother, it is seriously argued that the drama "may be regarded as in some sort an *apologia* and an *eirenicon*, or as a confession on the part of the poet that he was fully conscious that in some of the simple legends of the popular faith there was an element of sound sense (!) which thoughtful men must treat with forbearance, resolved on using it, if possible, as an instrument for inculcating a truer morality, instead of assailing it with a presumptuous denial" (J. E. Sandys, *The Bacchæ of Euripides*, 1880, introd. pp. lxxv-vi). Here we have the conformist ethic of the average English academic brought to bear on, and ascribed to, the personality of the Greek dramatist.

An academic of the same order, Prof. Mahaffy, similarly suggests that "among the half-educated Macedonian youth, with whom literature was coming into fashion, the poet *may* have met with a good deal of that insolent second-hand skepticism which is so offensive to a deep and serious thinker, and he *may* have wished to show them that he was not, as they *doubtless* hailed him, the apostle of this random speculative arrogance" (*Euripides* in *Class. Writ. Ser.* 1879, p. 85). As against the eminently "random" and "speculative arrogance" of this particular passage—a characteristic product of the obscurantist functions of some British university professors in matters of religion, and one which may fitly be pronounced offensive to honest men—it may be suggested on the other hand that, if Euripides got into trouble in Athens by his skepticism, he would be likely in Macedonia to encounter rather a greater stress of bigotry than a freethinking welcome, and that a non-critical presentment of the savage religious legend was forced on him by his environment.

Much of the academic discussion on the subject betrays a singular slowness to accept the dramatic standpoint. Even Prof. Murray, the finest interpreter of Euripides, dogmatically pronounces (introd. cited p. lvii) that "there is in the *Bacchæ* real and heartfelt glorification of Dionysus," simply because of the lyrical exaltation of the Bacchic choruses. But lyrical exaltation was in character here above all other cases; and it was the dramatist's business to present it. To say that "again and again in the lyrics you feel that the Mænads are no longer merely observed and analysed: the poet has entered into them and they into him," is nothing to the purpose. That the words which fall from the Chorus or its Leader are at times "not the words of a raving Bacchante, but of a gentle and deeply musing philosopher," is still nothing to the purpose. The same could be said of Shakespeare's handling of Macbeth. What, in sooth, would the real words of a raving Bacchante be like? If Milton lent dignity to Satan in Puritan England, was Euripides to do

less for Dionysos in Macedonia? That he should make Pentheus unsympathetic belongs to the plot. If he had made a noble martyr of the victim as well as an impassive destroyer of the God, he might have had to leave Macedonia more precipitately than he left Athens.

Prof. Murray recognizes all the while that "Euripides never palliates things. He leaves this savage story as savage as he found it"; that he presents a "triumphant and *hateful* Dionysus," who gives "a helpless fatalistic answer, abandoning the moral standpoint," when challenged by the stricken Agavê, whom the God has moved to dismember her own son; and that, in short, "Euripides is, as usual, critical or even hostile to the myth that he celebrates" (as cited, pp. liv-lvi). To set against these solid facts, as does Mr. Sandys (as cited, pp. lxxiii-iv), some passages in the choruses (ll. 395, 388, 427, 1002), and in a speech of Dionysos (1002), enouncing normal platitudes about the wisdom of thinking like other people and living a quiet life, is to strain very uncritically the elastic dramatic material. So far from being "not entirely in keeping" with the likely sentiments of a chorus of Asiatic women, the first-cited passages—telling that cleverness is not wisdom, and that true wisdom acquiesces in the opinions of ordinary people—are just the kind of mock-modest ineptitudes always current among the complacent ignorant; and the sage language ascribed to the heartless God is simply a presentment of deity in the fashion in which all Greeks expected to have it presented.

The fact remains that the story of the *Bacchæ*, in which the frenzied mother helps to tear to pieces her own son, and the God can but say it is all fated, is as revolting to the rational moral sense as the story of the *Prometheus*. If this be an *eirenicon*, it is surely the most ironical in literary history. To see in the impassive delineation of such a myth an acceptance by the poet of popular "sound sense," and "a desire to put himself right with the public in matters on which he had been misunderstood," seems possible only to academics trained to a particular handling of the popular creed of their own day. This view, first put forward by Tyrwhitt (*Conjecturæ in Æschylum, etc.* 1822), was adopted by Schoone (p. 20 of his ed. cited by Sandys). Lobeck, greatly daring wherever rationalism was concerned, suggested that Euripides actually wrote against the rationalists of his time, in commendation of the Bacchic cult, and to justify the popular view in religious matters as against that of the cultured (*Aglaophamus*—passages quoted by Sandys, p. lxxvi). Musgrave, following Tyrwhitt, makes the play out to be an attack on Kritias, Alkibiades, and other freethinkers, including even Sokrates! K. O. Müller, always ineptly conventional in such matters, finds Euripides in this play "converted into a positive believer, or, in other words, convinced that



religion should not be exposed to the subtleties of reasoning; that the understanding of man cannot subvert ancestral traditions which are as old as time," and so on; and in the Polonius-platitudes of Tiresias and the worldly-wise counsels of Cadmus he finds "great impressiveness" (*Hist. Lit. Anc. Greece*, p. 379).

The bulk of the literature of the subject, in short, suggests sombre reflections on the moral value of much academic thinking. There are, however, academic suffrages on the side of common sense. Mr. Haigh (*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, pp. 313-14) gently dismisses the "recantation" theory; Hartung points out (*Euripides restitutus*, 1844, ii, 542, cited by Sandys) that Euripides really treats the legend of Pentheus very much as he treats the myth of Hippolytos thirty years earlier, showing no change of moral attitude. E. Pfander (cited by Sandys) took a similar view; as did Mr. Tyrrell in his edition of the play (1871), though the latter persisted in taking the commonplaces of the chorus about true wisdom (395) for the judgments of the dramatist. Euripides could hardly have been called "the philosopher of the stage" (Athenæus, iv, 48) on the strength of sentiments which are common to the village wiseacres of all ages. The critical method which ascribes to Euripides a final hostility to rationalism would impute to Shakespeare the religion of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, when the talk of the Duke as a friar counselling a condemned man is wholly "pagan" or unbelieving.

In his admirable little book, *Euripides and his Age* (1913), Prof. Murray repeats his account of the *Bacchæ* with some additions and modifications. He adheres to the "heartfelt glorification of Dionysus," but adds (p. 188): "No doubt it is Dionysus in some private sense of the poet's own..... some spirit of.....inspiration and untrammelled life. The presentation is not consistent, however magical the poetry." As to the theory that "the veteran free-lance of thought..... now saw the error of his ways and was returning to orthodoxy," he pronounces that "Such a view strikes us now as almost childish in its incompetence" (p. 190). He also reminds us that "the whole scheme of the play is given by the ancient ritual.....All kinds of small details which seemed like..... rather fantastic invention on the part of Euripides are taken straight from Æschylus or the ritual, or both.....The *Bacchæ* is not free invention; it is tradition" (pp. 182-84). And in sum: "It is well to remember that, for all his lucidity of language, Euripides is not lucid about religion" (p. 190).

In conclusion we may ask, How could he be? He wrote plays for the Greek stage, which had its very roots in religious tradition, and was run for the edification of a crudely believing

populace. It is much that in so doing Euripides could a hundred times challenge the evil religious ethic given him for his subject-matter; and his lasting vogue in antiquity showed that he had a hold on the higher Greek conscience which no other dramatist ever possessed.

But while Euripides must thus have made a special appeal to the reflecting minority even in his own day, it is clear that he was not at first popular with the many; and his efforts, whatever he may have hoped to achieve, could not suffice to enlighten the democracy. The ribald blasphemies of his enemy, the believing Aristophanes,<sup>1</sup> could avail more to keep vulgar religion in credit than the tragedian's serious indictment could effect against it; and they served at the same time to belittle Euripides for the multitude in his own day. Aristophanes is the typical Tory in religion; non-religious himself, like Swift, he hates the honestly anti-religious man; and he has the crowd with him. The Athenian faith, as a Catholic scholar remarks,<sup>2</sup> "was more disposed to suffer the buffooneries of a comedian than the serious negation of a philosopher." The average Greek seemed to think that the grossest comic impiety did no harm, where serious negation might cause divine wrath.<sup>3</sup> And so there came no intellectual salvation for Athens from the drama which was her unique achievement. The balance of ignorance and culture was not changed. Evidently there was much rationalism among the studious few. Plato in the *Laws*<sup>4</sup> speaks both of the man-about-town type of freethinker and of those who, while they believe in no Gods, live well and wisely and are in good repute. But with Plato playing the superior mind and encouraging his fellow-townsmen to believe in the personality of the sun, moon, and planets, credulity could easily keep the upper hand.<sup>5</sup> The people remained politically unwise and religiously superstitious, the social struggle perpetuating the division between leisure and toil, even apart from the life of the mass of slaves; while the eternal pre-occupation of militarism left even the majority of the upper class at the intellectual level natural to military life in all ages. There came, however, a generation of great intellectual

<sup>1</sup> It seems arguable that the aversion of Aristophanes to Euripides was primarily artistic, arising in dislike of some of the features of his style. On this head his must be reckoned an expert judgment. The old criticism found in Euripides literary vices; the new seems to ignore the issue. But a clerical scholar pronounces that "Aristophanes was the most unreasoning laudator temporis acti. Genius and poet as he was, he was the sworn foe to intellectual progress." Hence his hatred of Euripides and his championship of Æschylus. (Rev. Dr. W. W. Merry, introd. to Clar. Press ed. of *The Frogs*, 1892.)

<sup>2</sup> Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, 1884, pp. 258-59.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 315. In the same way Ktesilochoi, the pupil of Apelles, could with impunity make Zeus ridiculous by exhibiting him pictorially in child-bed, bringing forth Dionysos (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv, 40, § 15).

<sup>4</sup> Bk. x, ad init.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 171.



splendour following on that of the supreme development of drama just before the fall of Greek freedom. Athens had at last come into the heritage of Greek philosophic thought; and to the utterance of that crowning generation the human retrospect has turned ever since. This much of renown remains inalienable from the most renowned democracy of the ancient world.

## § 8

The wide subject of the teaching of SOKRATES, PLATO, and ARISTOTLE must here be noticed briefly, with a view only to our special inquiry. All three must be inscribed in any list of ancient freethinkers; and yet all three furthered freethought only indirectly, the two former being in different degrees supernaturalists, while the last touched on religious questions only as a philosopher, avoiding all question of practical innovation.

The same account holds good of the best of the so-called Sophists, as GORGIAS the Sicilian (? 485-380), who was a nihilistic skeptic; HIPPIAS of Elis, who, setting up an emphatic distinction between Nature and Convention, impugned the political laws and prejudices which estranged men of thought and culture; and PRODIKOS of Kos (fl. 435), author of the fable of Herakles at the Parting of the Ways, who seems to have privately criticized the current Gods as mere deifications of useful things and forces, and was later misconceived as teaching that the things and forces were Gods. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deorum*, i, 42; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathematicos*, ix, 52; Ueberweg, vol. i, p. 78; Renouvier, i, 291-93. Cicero saw very well that if men came to see in Demeter merely a deification of corn or bread, in Dionysos wine, in Hephaistos fire, and in Poseidon only water, there was not much left in religion. On the score of their systematic skepticism, that is, their insistence on the subjectivity of all opinion, Prof. Drews pronounces the Sophists at once the "Aufklärer" and the Pragmatists of ancient Greece (*Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 209). But their thought was scarcely homogeneous.

1. SOKRATES [468-399] was fundamentally and practically a freethinker, insofar as in most things he thought for himself, definitely turning away from the old ideal of mere transmitted authority in morals.<sup>1</sup> Starting in all inquiries from a position of professed ignorance, he at least repudiated all dogmatics.<sup>2</sup> Being, however, preoccupied with public life and conduct, he did not carry

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 227; Hegel, as there cited Grote, *Plato*, ed. 1885, i, 423.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, i, 181 sq., 291, 293, 299, etc

his critical thinking far beyond that sphere. In regard to the extension of solid science, one of the prime necessities of Greek intellectual life, he was quite reactionary, drawing a line between the phenomena which he thought intelligible and traceable and those which he thought past finding out. "Physics and astronomy, in his opinion, belonged to the divine class of phenomena in which human research was insane, fruitless, and impious."<sup>1</sup> Yet at the same time he formulated, apparently of his own motion, the ordinary design argument.<sup>2</sup> The sound scientific view led up to by so many previous thinkers was set forth, even in religious phraseology, by his great contemporary Hippokrates,<sup>3</sup> and he opposed it. While partially separating himself in practice from the popular worships, he held by the belief in omens, though not in all the ordinary ones; and in one of the Platonic dialogues he is made to say he holds by the ordinary versions of all the myths, on the ground that it is a hopeless task to find rational explanations for them.<sup>4</sup> He hoped, in short, to rationalize conduct without seeking to rationalize creed—the dream of Plato and of a thousand religionists since.

He had indeed the excuse that the myth-rationalizers of the time after Hekataios, following the line of least psychic resistance, like those of England and Germany in the eighteenth century, explained away myths by reducing them to hypothetical history, thus asking credence for something no better verified than the myth itself. But the rationalizers were on a path by which men might conceivably have journeyed to a truer science; and Sokrates, by refusing to undertake any such exploration,<sup>5</sup> left his countrymen to that darkening belief in tradition which made possible his own execution. There was in his cast of mind, indeed—if we can at all accept Plato's presentment of him—something unfavourable to steady conviction. He cannot have had any real faith in the current religion; yet he never explicitly dissented. In the *Republic* he accepts the new festival to the Thracian Goddess Bendis; and there he is made by Plato to inculcate a quite orthodox acceptance of the Delphic oracle as the source of all religious practice. But it is impossible to say how much of the teaching of the Platonic Sokrates is Sokratic. And as to Plato there remains the problem of how far his conformities were prudential, after the execution of Sokrates for blasphemy.

<sup>1</sup> Grote, *History*, i, 334; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i, 1, §§ 6-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Benn, *The Philosophy of the Greeks*, 1898, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Grote, i, 334-35; Hippocrates, *De Aeribus, Aquis, Locis*, c. 22 (49).

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Phædrus*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. i, 434; Grote, *History*, i, 393.

<sup>5</sup> Compare, however, the claim made for him, as promoting "objectivity," by Prof. Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus im Altertum*, 1913, p. 213.



The long-debated issue as to the real personality of Sokrates is still open. It is energetically and systematically handled by Prof. August Döring in *Die Lehre des Sokrates als sociales Reformsystem* (1895), and by Dr. Hubert Röck in *Der unverfälschte Sokrates* (1903). See, in particular, Döring, pp. 51-79, and Röck, pp. 357-96. From all attempts to arrive at a conception of a consistent Sokrates there emerges the impression that the real Sokrates, despite a strong critical bent of mind, had no clearly established body of opinions, but was swayed in different directions by the itch for contradiction which was the driving power of his dialectic. For the so-called Sokratic "method" is much less a method for attaining truth than one for disturbing prejudice. And if in Plato's hands Sokrates seldom reaches a conclusion that his own method might not overthrow, we are not entitled to refuse to believe that this was characteristic of the man.

Concerning Sokrates we have Xenophon's circumstantial account<sup>1</sup> of how he reasoned with Aristodemos, "surnamed the Little," who "neither prayed nor sacrificed to the Gods, nor consulted any oracle, and ridiculed those who did." Aristodemos was a theist, believing in a "Great Architect" or "Artist," or a number of such powers—on this he is as vague as the ancient theists in general—but does not think the heavenly powers need his devotions. Sokrates, equally vague as to the unity or plurality of the divine, puts the design argument in the manner familiar throughout the ages,<sup>2</sup> and follows it up with the plea, among others, that the States most renowned for wisdom and antiquity have always been the most given to pious practices, and that probably the Gods will be kind to those who show them respect. The whole philosopheme is pure empiricism, on the ordinary plane of polytheistic thought, and may almost be said to exhibit incapacity for the handling of philosophic questions, evading as it does even the elementary challenge of Aristodemos, against whom Sokrates parades pious platitudes without a hint of "Sokratic" analysis. Unless such a performance were regarded as make-believe, it is difficult to conceive how Athenian pietists could honestly arraign Sokrates for irreligion while Aristodemos and others of his way of thinking went unmolested.

Taken as illustrating the state of thought in the Athenian community, the trial and execution of Sokrates for "blasphemy" and "corrupting the minds of the young" go far to prove that there

<sup>1</sup> *Memorabilia*, i, 4.

<sup>2</sup> "The predominatingly theistic character of philosophy ever since has been stamped on it by Sokrates, as it was stamped on Sokrates by Athens" (Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 168).

prevailed among the upper class in Athens nearly as much hypocrisy in religious matters as exists in the England of to-day. Doubtless he was liable to death from the traditionally orthodox Greek point of view,<sup>1</sup> having practically turned aside from the old civic creed and ideals; but then most educated Athenians had in some degree done the same.<sup>2</sup> Euripides, as we have seen, is so frequently critical of the old theology and mythology in his plays that he too could easily have been indicted; and Aristophanes, who attacked Euripides in his comedies as scurrilously as he did Sokrates, would no doubt have been glad to see him prosecuted.<sup>3</sup> The psychology of Aristophanes, who freely ridiculed and blasphemed the Gods in his own comedies while reviling all men who did not believe in them, is hardly intelligible save in the light of parts of the English history of our own time, when unbelieving indifferentists on the Conservative side have been seen ready to join in turning the law against a freethinking publicist for purely party ends. In the case of Sokrates the hostility was ostensibly democratic, for, according to Æschines, Sokrates was condemned because he had once given lessons to Kritias,<sup>4</sup> one of the most savage and unscrupulous of the Thirty Tyrants. Inasmuch as Kritias had become entirely alienated from Sokrates, and had even put him to silence, such a ground of hostility would only be a fresh illustration of that collective predilection of men to a gregarious iniquity which is no less noteworthy in the psychology of groups than their profession of high moral standards. And such proclivities are always to be reckoned with in such episodes. Anytos, the leading prosecutor, seems to have been a typical bigot, brainless, spiteful, and thoroughly self-satisfied. Not only party malice, however, but the individual dislikes which Sokrates so industriously set up,<sup>5</sup> must have counted for much in securing the small majority of the dikastery that pronounced him guilty—281 to 276; and his own clear preference for death over any sort of compromise did the rest.<sup>6</sup> He was old, and little

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, as cited, p. 231. The case against Sokrates is bitterly urged by Forchhammer, *Die Athenen und Sokrates*, 1837; see in particular pp. 8-11. Cp. Grote, *Hist.* vii, 81.

<sup>2</sup> "Had not all the cultivated men of the time passed through a school of rationalism which had entirely pulled to pieces the beliefs and the morals of their ancestors?" Zeller, as last cited, pp. 231-33. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup> See Aristophanes's *Frogs*, 888-94.

<sup>4</sup> Æschines, *Timarchos*, cited by Thirlwall, iv, 277. Cp. Xenophon, *Mem.* i, 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Nothing could well be more unpopular and obnoxious than the task which he undertook of cross-examining and convicting of ignorance every distinguished man whom he could approach." Grote, vii, 95. Cp. pp. 141-44. Cp. also Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, ed. 1881, p. 316; and Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* i, iv, § iii. See also, however, Benn, *Phil. of Greece*, pp. 162-63. For a view of Sokrates's relations to his chief accuser, which partially vindicates or whitewashes the latter, see Prof. G. Murray's *Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 176-77. There is a good monograph by H. Bleekly, *Socrates and the Athenians: An Apology*, 1884, which holds the balances fairly.

<sup>6</sup> On the desire of Sokrates to die see Grote, vii, 152-64.



hopeful of social betterment; and the temperamental obstinacy which underlay his perpetual and pertinacious debating helped him to choose a death that he could easily have avoided. But the fact remains that he was not popular; that the mass of the voters as well as of the upper class disliked his constant cross-examination of popular opinion,<sup>1</sup> which must often have led logical listeners to carry on criticism where he left off; and that after all his ratiocination he left Athens substantially irrational, as well as incapable of justice, on some essential issues. His dialectic method has done more to educate the later world than it did for Greece.

Upon the debate as to the legal punishability of Sokrates turns another as to the moral character of the Athenians who forced him to drink the hemlock. Professor Mahaffy, bent on proving the superiority of Athenian culture and civilization to those of Christendom, effectively contrasts the calm scene in the prison-chamber of Sokrates with the hideous atrocities of the death penalty for treason in the modern world and the "gauntness and horror of our modern executions" (*Social Life in Greece*, 3rd. ed. pp. 262-69); and Mr. Bleekly (*Socrates and the Athenians*, 1884, pp. 55-63) similarly sets against the pagan case that of the burning of heretics by the Christian Church, and in particular the *auto da fé* at Valladolid in 1559, when fifteen men and women—the former including the conscientious priests who had proposed to meet the hostility of Protestant dissent in the Netherlands by reforms in the Church: the latter including delicately-nurtured ladies of high family—were burned to death before the eyes of the Princess Regent of Spain and the aristocracy of Castile. It is certainly true that this transaction has no parallel in the criminal proceedings of pagan Athens. Christian cruelty has been as much viler than pagan, culture for culture, as the modern Christian environment is uglier than the Athenian. Before such a test the special pleaders for the civilizing power of Christianity can but fall back upon alternative theses which are the negation of their main case. First we are told that "Christianity humanizes men"; next that where it does *not* do so it is because they are too inhuman to be made Christians.

But while the orthodoxy of pagan Athens thus comes very well off as against the frightful crime-roll of organized Christianity, the dispassionate historian must nonetheless note the dehumanizing power of religion in Athens as in Christendom. The pietists of Athens, in their less brutish way, were as hope-

<sup>1</sup> The assertion of Plutarch that after his death the prosecutors of Sokrates were socially excommunicated, and so driven to hang themselves (*Moralia: Of Envy and Hatred*), is an interesting instance of moral myth-making. It has no historic basis; though Diogenes (ii, 23 § 43) and Diodorus Siculus (xiv, 37), late authorities both, allege an Athenian reaction in Sokrates' favour. Probably the story of the suicide of Judas was framed in imitation of Plutarch's.

lessly denaturalized as those of Christian Europe by the dominion of a traditional creed, held as above reason. It matters not whether or not we say with Bishop Thirlwall (*Hist. of Greece*, 2nd ed. iv, 556) that "there never was a case in which murder was more clearly committed under the forms of legal procedure than in the trial of Sokrates," or press on the other side the same writer's admission that in religious matters in Athens "there was no canon, no book by which a doctrine could be tried; no living authority to which appeal could be made for the decision of religious controversies." The fact that Christendom had "authorities" who ruled which of two sets of insane dogmas brought death upon its propounder, does not make less abominable the slaying of Bruno and Servetus, or the immeasurable massacre of less eminent heretics. But the less formalized homicides sanctioned by the piety of Periklean Athens remain part of the proof that unreasoning faith worsens men past calculation. If we slur over such deeds by generalities about human frailty, we are but asserting the impossibility of rationally respecting human nature. If, putting aside all moral censure, we are simply concerned to trace and comprehend causation in human affairs, we have no choice but to note how upon occasion religion on one hand, like strong drink on another, can turn commonplace men into murderers.

In view of the limitations of Sokrates, and the mental measure of those who voted for putting him to death, it is not surprising that through all Greek history educated men (including Aristotle) continued to believe firmly in the deluge of Deukalion<sup>1</sup> and the invasion of the Amazons<sup>2</sup> as solid historical facts. Such beliefs, of course, are on all fours with those current in the modern religious world down till the present century: we shall, in fact, best appraise the rationality of Greece by making such comparisons. The residual lesson is that where Greek reason ended, modern social science had better be regarded as only beginning. THUKYDIDES, the greatest of all the ancient historians, and one of the great of all time, treated human affairs in a spirit so strictly rationalistic that he might reasonably be termed an atheist on that score even if he had not earned the name as a pupil of Anaxagoras.<sup>3</sup> But his task was to chronicle a war which proved that the Greeks were to the last children of instinct for the main purposes of life, and that the rule of reason which they are credited with establishing<sup>4</sup> was only an

<sup>1</sup> Grote, *History*, i, 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, 194. Not till Strabo do we find this myth disbelieved; and Strabo was surprised to find most men holding by the old story while admitting that the race of Amazons had died out. *Id.* p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Life of Thukydides, by Marcellinus, ch. 22, citing Antyllas. Cp. Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, p. 239; and the prefaces of Hobbes and Smith to their translations.

<sup>4</sup> Girard, p. 3.



intermittent pastime. In the days of Demosthenes we still find them politically consulting the Pythian oracle, despite the consciousness among educated men that the oracle is a piece of political machinery. We can best realize the stage of their evolution by first comparing their public religious practice with that of contemporary England. No one now regards the daily prayers of the House of Commons as more than a reverent formality. But Nikias at Syracuse staked the fortunes of war on the creed of omens. We can perhaps finally conceive with fair accuracy the subordination of Greek culture and politics to superstition by likening the thought-levels of pre-Alexandrian Athens to those of England under Cromwell.

2. The decisive measure of Greek accomplishment is found in the career of PLATO [429-347]. One of the great prose writers of the world, he has won by his literary genius—that is, by his power of continuous presentation as well as by his style—no less than by his service to supernaturalist philosophy in general, a repute above his deserts as a thinker. In Christian history he is the typical philosopher of Dualism,<sup>1</sup> his prevailing conception of the universe being that of an inert Matter acted on or even created by a craftsman-God, the "Divine Artificer," sometimes conceived as a *Logos* or divine Reason, separately personalized. Thus he came to be *par excellence* the philosopher of theism, as against Aristotle and those of the Pythagoreans who affirmed the eternity of the universe.<sup>2</sup> In the history of freethought he figures as a man of genius formed by Sokrates and reflecting his limitations, developing the Sokratic dialectic on the one hand and finally emphasizing the Sokratic dogmatism to the point of utter bigotry. If the Athenians are to be condemned for putting Sokrates to death, it must not be forgotten that the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Laws* drawn up by Plato in his old age fully justified them.<sup>3</sup> That code, could it ever have been put in force, would have wrought the death of every honest freethinker as well as most of the ignorant believers within its sphere. Alone among the great serious writers of Greece does he implicate Greek thought in the gospel of intolerance passed on to modern Europe from antiquity. It is recorded of him<sup>4</sup> that he wished to

<sup>1</sup> "His writings," remarks Dr. Hatch, "contain the seeds of nearly all that afterwards grew up on Christian soil" (*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, p. 182).

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, v, 14; Fairbanks, pp. 146-47; Grote, *Plato*, ch. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Grote, *Plato*, iv, 162, 381. Professor Bain, however (*Practical Essays*, 1884, p. 273), raises an interesting question by his remark, as to the death of Sokrates: "The first person to feel the shock was Plato. That he was affected by it to the extent of suppressing his views on the higher questions we can infer with the greatest probability. Aristotle was equally cowed."

<sup>4</sup> Diog. Laër. bk. ix, ch. vii, § 8 (40).

burn all the writings of Demokritos that he could collect, and was dissuaded only on the score of the number of copies.

What was best in Plato, considered as a freethinker, was his early love of ratiocination, of "the rendering and receiving of reasons." Even in his earlier dialogues, however, there are signs enough of an arbitrary temper, as well as of an inability to put science in place of religious prejudice. The obscurantist doctrine which he put in the mouth of Sokrates in the *Phædrus* was also his own, as we gather from the exposition in the *Republic*. In that brilliant performance he objects, as so many believers and freethinkers had done before him, to the scandalous tales in the poets concerning the Gods and the sons of Gods; but he does not object to them as being untrue. His position is that they are unedifying.<sup>1</sup> For his own part he proposes that his ideal rulers frame new myths which shall edify the young: in his Utopia it is part of the business of the legislator to choose the right fictions;<sup>2</sup> and the systematic imposition of an edifying body of pious fable on the general intelligence is part of his scheme for the regeneration of society.<sup>3</sup> Honesty is to be built up by fraud, and reason by delusion. What the Hebrew Bible-makers actually did, Plato proposed to do. The one thing to be said in his favour is that by thus telling how the net is to be spread in the sight of the bird he put the decisive obstacle—if any were needed—in the way of his plan. It is, indeed, inconceivable that the author of the *Republic* and the *Laws* dreamt that either polity as a whole would ever come into existence. His plans of suppressing all undesirable poetry, arranging community of women, and enabling children to see battles, are the fancy-sketches of a dilettant. He had failed completely as a statesman in practice; as a schemer he does not even posit the first conditions of success.

As to his practical failure see the story of his and his pupils' attempts at Syracuse (Grote, *History*, ix, 37-123). The younger Dionysios, whom they had vainly attempted to make a model ruler, seems to have been an audacious unbeliever to the extent of plundering the temple of Persephone at Lokris, one of Jupiter in the Peloponnesos, and one of Æsculapius at Epidaurus. Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* c. 4) states that he plundered "the statue of Jupiter in Sicily." Cicero (*De nat. Deorum*, iii, 33, 34) and Valerius Maximus (i, 1) tell the story of the elder Dionysios; but of him it cannot be true. In his day the

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, bk. ii, 377, to iii, 392; Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. iii, 60 sq., 68 sq. In bk. x, it is true, he does speak of the poets as unqualified by knowledge and training to teach truth (Jowett's tr. iii, 311 sq.); but Plato's "truth" is not objective, but idealistic, or rather fictitious-didactic.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* Jowett, pp. 59, 69, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* bk. iii; Jowett, pp. 103-105.



plunder of the temples of Dêmêtêr and Persephone in Sicily by the Carthaginians was counted a deadly sin. See Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iv, 125-47, and *Story of Sicily*, pp. 176-80. In Cicero's dialogue it is noted that after all his impieties Dionysios [the elder, of whom the stories are mistakenly told] died in his bed. Athenæus, however, citing the biographer Klearchos, tells that the younger Dionysios, after being reduced to the rôle of a begging priest of Kybelê, ended his life very miserably (xii, 60).

Nonetheless, the prescription of intolerance in the *Laws*<sup>1</sup> classes Plato finally on the side of fanaticism, and, indeed, ranks him with the most sinister figures on that side, since his earlier writing shows that he would be willing to punish men alike for repeating stories which they believed, and for rejecting what *he* knew to be untruths.<sup>2</sup> By his own late doctrine he vindicated the slayers of his own friend. His psychology is as strange as that of Aristophanes, but strange with a difference. He seems to have practised "the will to believe" till he grew to be a fanatic on the plane of the most ignorant of orthodox Athenians; and after all that science had done to enlighten men on that natural order the misconceiving of which had been the foundation of their creeds, he inveighs furiously in his old age against the impiety of those who dared to doubt that the sun and moon and stars were deities, as every nurse taught her charges.<sup>3</sup> And when all is said, his Gods satisfy no need of the intelligence; for he insists that they only partially rule the world, sending the few good things, but not the many evil<sup>4</sup>—save insofar as evil may be a beneficent penalty and discipline. At the same time, while advising the imprisonment or execution of heretics who did not believe in the Gods, Plato regarded with even greater detestation the man who taught that they could be persuaded or propitiated by individual prayer and sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> Thus he would have struck alike at the freethinking few and at the multitude who held by the general religious beliefs of Greece, dealing damnation on all save his own clique, in a way that would have made Torquemada blench.<sup>6</sup> In the face of such teaching as this, it may well be said that "Greek philosophy made incomparably greater advances in the earlier polemic period [of the Ionians] than after its friendly return to

<sup>1</sup> *Laws*, x; Jowett, v, 295-98.

<sup>2</sup> Received myths are forbidden; and the preferred fictions are to be city law. Cp. the *Laws*, ii, iii; Jowett, v, 42, 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Laws*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. v, 271-72. Cp. the comment of Benn, i, 271-72.

<sup>4</sup> *Republic*, bk. ii, 379; Jowett, iii, 62.

<sup>5</sup> *Laws*, x, 906-907, 910; Jowett, v, 293-94, 297-98.

<sup>6</sup> On the inconsistency of the whole doctrine see Grote's *Plato*, iv, 379-97.

the poetry of Homer and Hesiod"<sup>1</sup>—that is, to their polytheistic basis. It is to be said for Plato, finally, that his embitterment at the downward course of things in Athens is a quite intelligible source for his own intellectual decadence: a very similar spectacle being seen in the case of our own great modern Utopist, Sir Thomas More. But Plato's own writing bears witness that among the unbelievers against whom he declaimed there were wise and blameless citizens;<sup>2</sup> while in the act of seeking to lay a religious basis for a good society he admitted the fundamental immorality of the religious basis of the whole of past Greek life.

3. ARISTOTLE [384-322], like Sokrates, albeit in a very different way, rendered rather an indirect than a direct service to Freethought. Where Sokrates gave the critical or dialectic method or habit, "a process of eternal value and of universal application,"<sup>3</sup> Aristotle supplied the great inspiration of system, partly correcting the Sokratic dogmatism on the possibilities of science by endless observation and speculation, though himself falling into scientific dogmatism only too often. That he was an unbeliever in the popular and Platonic religion is clear. Apart from the general rationalistic tenor of his works,<sup>4</sup> there was a current understanding that the Peripatetic school denied the utility of prayer and sacrifice;<sup>5</sup> and though the essentially partisan attempt of the anti-Macedonian party to impeach him for impiety may have turned largely on his hyperbolic hymn to his dead friend Hermeias (who was a eunuch, and as such held peculiarly unworthy of being addressed as on a level with semi-divine heroes),<sup>6</sup> it could hardly have been undertaken at all unless he had given solidier pretexts. The threatened prosecution he avoided by leaving the city, dying shortly afterwards. Siding as he did with the Macedonian faction, he had put himself out of touch with the democratic instincts of the Athenians, and so doubly failed to affect their thinking. But nonetheless the attack upon him by the democrats was a political stratagem. The prosecution for blasphemy had now become a recognized weapon in politics for all who had more piety than principle, and perhaps for some who had neither. And Aristotle, well aware of the temper of the

<sup>1</sup> Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.*, Eng. tr. i, 25. Cp. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, i, 38-39 (tr. i, 52-54), and the remarkable verdict of Bacon (*De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. 4; *Works*, 1-vol. ed. 1905, p. 471; cp. *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, p. 96) as to the superiority of the natural philosophy of Demokritos over those of Plato and Aristotle. Bacon immediately qualifies his verdict; but he repeats it, as regards both Aristotle and Plato, in the *Novum Organum*, bk. i, aph. 96. See, however, Mr. Benn's final eulogy of Plato as a thinker, i, 273, and Murray's *Anc. Greek Lit.*, pp. 311-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Laws*, x, 908; Jowett, v, 295.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Grote, *Aristotle*, 2nd ed. p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, ii, 13; cp. i, 65; iii, 75; vii, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Grote, *Aristotle*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Grote, *History*, vii, 168.



population around him, had on the whole been so guarded in his utterance that a fantastic pretext had to be fastened on for his undoing.

Prof. Bain (*Practical Essays*, p. 273), citing Grote's remark on the "cautious prose compositions of Aristotle," comments thus: "That is to say, the execution of Sokrates was always before his eyes; he had to pare his expressions so as not to give offence to Athenian orthodoxy. We can never know the full bearings of such a disturbing force. The editors of Aristotle complain of the corruption of his text: a far worse corruption lies behind. In Greece Sokrates alone had the courage of his opinions. While his views as to a future life, for example, are plain and frank, the real opinion of Aristotle on the question is an insoluble problem." (See, however, the passage in the *Metaphysics* cited below.)

The opinion of Grote and Bain as to Aristotle's caution is fully coincided in by Lange, who writes (*Gesch. des Mater.* i, 63): "More conservative than Plato and Sokrates, Aristotle everywhere seeks to attach himself as closely as possible to tradition, to popular notions, to the ideas embodied in common speech, and his ethical postulates diverge as little as may be from the customary morals and laws of Greek States. He has therefore been at all times the favourite philosopher of conservative schools and movements."

It is clear, nevertheless, if we can be sure of his writings, that he was a monotheist, but a monotheist with no practical religion. "Excluding such a thing as divine interference with Nature, his theology, of course, excludes the possibility of revelation, inspiration, miracles, and grace."<sup>1</sup> In a passage in the *Metaphysics*, after elaborating his monistic conception of Nature, he dismisses in one or two terse sentences the whole current religion as a mass of myth framed to persuade the multitude, in the interest of law and order.<sup>2</sup> His influence must thus have been to some extent, at least, favourable to rational science, though unhappily his own science is too often a blundering reaction against the surmises of earlier thinkers with a greater gift of intuition than he, who was rather a methodizer than a discoverer.<sup>3</sup> What was worst in his thinking was its tendency to

<sup>1</sup> Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, i, 352. Mr. Benn refutes Sir A. Grant's view that Aristotle's creed was a "vague pantheism"; but that phrase loosely conveys the idea of its non-religiousness. It might be called a Lucretian monotheism. Cp. Benn, i, 294; and Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Metaphysics*, xi (xii), 8, 13 (p. 1074, b). The passage is so stringent as to raise the question how he came to run the risk in this one case. It was probably a late writing, and he may have taken it for granted that the *Metaphysics* would never be read by the orthodox.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the severe criticisms of Benn, vol. i, ch. vi; Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* p. 33; and Lange, *Gesch. des Mater.* i, 61-68, and notes, citing Eucken and Cuvier. Aristotle's science is very much on a par with that of Bacon, who saw his imperfections, but fell into the same kinds of error. Both insisted on an inductive method; and both transgressed from it. See, however, Lange's summary, p. 69, also p. 7, as to the unfairness of Whewell; and ch. v of Soury's *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, 1881, especially end.

apriorism, which made it in a later age so adaptable to the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus his doctrines of the absolute levity of fire and of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum set up a hypnotizing verbalism, and his dictum that the earth is the centre of the universe was fatally helpful to Christian obscurantism. For the rest, while guiltless of Plato's fanaticism, he had no scheme of reform whatever, and was as far as any other Greek from the thought of raising the mass by instruction. His own science, indeed, was not progressive, save as regards his collation of facts in biology; and his political ideals were rather reactionary; his clear perception of the nature of the population problem leaving him in the earlier attitude of Malthus, and his lack of sympathetic energy making him a defender of slavery when other men had condemned it.<sup>1</sup> He was in some aspects the greatest brain of the ancient world; and he left it, at the close of the great Grecian period, without much faith in man, while positing for the modern world its vaguest conception of Deity. Plato and Aristotle between them had reduced the ancient God-idea to a thin abstraction. Plato would not have it that God was the author of evil, thus leaving evil unaccounted for save by sorcery. Aristotle's God does nothing at all, existing merely as a potentiality of thought. And yet upon those positions were to be founded the theisms of the later world. Plato had not striven, and Aristotle had failed, to create an adequate basis for thought in real science; and the world gravitated back to religion.

[In previous editions I remarked that "the lack of fresh science, which was the proximate cause of the stagnation of Greek thought, has been explained like other things as a result of race qualities: 'the Athenians,' says Mr. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 42), 'had no genius for natural science: none of them were ever distinguished as savans.....It was, they thought, a miserable trifling [and] waste of time.....Pericles, indeed, thought differently.....' On the other hand, Lange decides (i, 6) "that with the freedom and boldness of the Hellenic spirit was combined.....the talent for scientific deduction." These contrary views," I observed, "seem alike arbitrary. If Mr. Benn means that other Hellenes had what the Athenians lacked, the answer is that only special social conditions could have set up such a difference, and that it could not be innate, but must be a mere matter of usage." Mr. Benn has explained to me that he does not dissent from this view, and that I had not rightly gathered his from the passage I quoted. In his later work, *The Philosophy of Greece*

<sup>1</sup> *Politics*, i, 2.



considered in relation to the character and history of its people (1898), he has pointed out how, in the period of Hippias and Prodikos, "at Athens in particular young men threw themselves with ardour into the investigation of" problems of cosmography, astronomy, meteorology, and comparative anatomy (p. 138). The hindering forces were Athenian bigotry (pp. 113-14, 171) and the mischievous influence of Sokrates (pp. 165, 173).

Speaking broadly, we may say that the Chaldeans were forward in astronomy because their climate favoured it to begin with, and religion and their superstitions did so later. Hippokrates of Kos became a great physician because, with natural capacity, he had the opportunity to compare many practices. The Athenians failed to carry on the sciences, not because the faculty or the taste was lacking among them, but because their political and artistic interests, for one thing, preoccupied them—e.g., Sokrates and Plato; and because, for another, their popular religion, popularly supported, menaced the students of physics. But the Ionians, who *had* savans, failed equally to progress after the Alexandrian period; the explanation being again not stoppage of faculty, but the advent of conditions unfavourable to the old intellectual life, which in any case, as we saw, had been first set up by Babylonian contacts. (Compare, on the ethnological theorem of Cousin, G. Bréton, *Essai sur la poésie philos. en Grèce*, p. 10.) On the other hand, Lange's theory of gifts "innate" in the Hellenic mind in general is the old racial fallacy. Potentialities are "innate" in all populations, according to their culture stage, and it was their total environment that specialized the Greeks as a community.]

## § 9

The overthrow of the "free" political life of Athens was followed by a certain increase in intellectual activity, the result of throwing back the remaining store of energy on the life of the mind. By this time an almost open unbelief as to the current tales concerning the Gods would seem to have become general among educated people, the withdrawal of the old risk of impeachment by political factions being so far favourable to outspokenness. It is on record that the historian EPHOROS (of Cumæ in Æolia: fl. 350 B.C.), who was a pupil of Isocrates, openly hinted in his work at his disbelief in the oracle of Apollo, and in fabulous traditions generally.<sup>1</sup> In other directions there were similar signs of freethought. The new schools of philosophy founded by ZENO the Stoic (fl. 280: d. 263 or 259)

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, bk. ix, ch. iii, § 11. Strabo reproaches Ephoros with repeating the current legends all the same; but it seems clear that he anticipated the critical tactic of Gibbon.

and EPICURUS (341-270), whatever their defects, compare not ill with those of Plato and Aristotle, exhibiting greater ethical sanity and sincerity if less metaphysical subtlety. Of metaphysics there had been enough for the age: what it needed was a rational philosophy of life. But the loss of political freedom, although thus for a time turned to account, was fatal to continuous progress. The first great thinkers had all been free men in a politically free environment: the atmosphere of cowed subjection, especially after the advent of the Romans, could not breed their like; and originative energy of the higher order soon disappeared. Sane as was the moral philosophy of Epicurus, and austere as was that of Zeno, they are alike static or quietist,<sup>1</sup> the codes of a society seeking a regulating and sustaining principle rather than hopeful of new achievement or new truth. And the universal skepticism of PYRRHO has the same effect of suggesting that what is wanted is not progress, but balance. It is significant that he, who carried the Sokratic profession of Nescience to the typical extreme of doctrinal Nihilism, was made high-priest of his native town of Elis, and had statues erected in his honour.<sup>2</sup>

Considered as freethinkers, all three men tell at once of the critical and of the reactionary work done by the previous age. Pyrrho, the universal doubter, appears to have taken for granted, with the whole of his followers, such propositions as that some animals (not insects) are produced by parthenogenesis, that some live in the fire, and that the legend of the Phoenix is true.<sup>3</sup> Such credences stood for the arrest of biological science in the Sokratic age, with Aristotle, so often mistakenly, at work; while, on the other hand, the Sokratic skepticism visibly motives the play of systematic doubt on the dogmas men had learned to question. Zeno, again, was substantially a monotheist; Epicurus, adopting but not greatly developing the science of Demokritos,<sup>4</sup> turned the Gods into a far-off band of glorious spectres, untroubled by human needs, dwelling for ever in immortal calm, neither ruling nor caring

<sup>1</sup> As to the Stoics, cp. Zeller, § 34, 4; Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, pp. 255-56. As to Epicurus, cp. Benn, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. xi, § 64. The lengthy notice given by Diogenes shows the impression Pyrrho's teaching made. See a full account of it, so far as known, in the Rev. J. Owen's *Evenings with the Sceptics*, 1881, i, 287 sq., and the monograph of Zimmerman, there cited.

<sup>3</sup> These propositions occur in the first of the ten Pyrrhonian *tropoi* or modes (Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. xi, § 9), of which the authorship is commonly assigned to Anesidemus (fl. 80-50). Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Sceptics*, i, 290, 322-23. But as given by Diogenes they seem to derive from the early Pyrrhonian school.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, where Democritus pronounced the sun to be of vast size, Epicurus held it to be no larger than it seemed (Cicero, *De Finibus*, i, 6)—a view also loosely ascribed to Herakleitos (Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. i, § 7). See, however, Wallace's *Epicureanism* ("Ancient Philosophies" series), 1889, pp. 176 sq., 186 sq., 266, as to the scientific merits of the system.



to rule the world of men.<sup>1</sup> In coming to this surprising compromise, Epicurus, indeed, probably did not carry with him the whole intelligence even of his own school. His friend, the second Metrodoros of Lampsakos, seems to have been the most stringent of all the censors of Homer, wholly ignoring his namesake's attempts to clear the bard of impiety. "He even advised men not to be ashamed to confess their utter ignorance of Homer, to the extent of not knowing whether Hector was a Greek or a Trojan."<sup>2</sup> Such austerity towards myths can hardly have been compatible with the acceptance of the residuum of Epicurus. That, however, became the standing creed of the sect, and a fruitful theme of derision to its opponents. Doubtless the comfort of avoiding direct conflict with the popular beliefs had a good deal to do with the acceptance of the doctrine.

This strange retention of the theorem of the existence of anthropomorphic Gods, with a flat denial that they did anything in the universe, might be termed the great peculiarity of average ancient rationalism, were it not that what makes it at all intelligible for us is just the similar practice of modern non-Christian theists. The Gods of antiquity were non-creative, but strivers and meddlers and answerers of prayer; and ancient rationalism relieved them of their striving and meddling, leaving them no active or governing function whatever, but for the most part cherishing their phantasms. The God of modern Christendom had been at once a creator and a governor, ruling, meddling, punishing, rewarding, and hearing prayer; and modern theism, unable to take the atheistic or agnostic plunge, relieves him of all interference in things human or cosmic, but retains him as a creative abstraction who somehow set up "law," whether or not he made all things out of nothing. The psychological process in the two cases seems to be the same—an erection of æsthetic habit into a philosophic dogma, and an accommodation of phrase to popular prejudice.

Whatever may have been the logical and psychological crudities of Epicureanism, however, it counted for much as a deliverance of men from superstitious fears; and nothing is more remarkable in the history of ancient philosophy than the affectionate reverence paid to the founder's memory<sup>3</sup> on this score through whole centuries. The powerful Lucretius sounds his highest note of praise in telling

<sup>1</sup> The Epicurean doctrine on this and other heads is chiefly to be gathered from the great poem of Lucretius. Prof. Wallace's excellent treatise gives all the clues. See p. 202 as to the Epicurean God-idea.

<sup>2</sup> Grote, *History*, i, 395, note; Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi sec. Epicur.*

<sup>3</sup> Compare Wallace, *Epicureanism*, pp. 64-71, and ch. xi; and Mackintosh, *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, 4th ed. p. 29.

how this Greek had first of all men freed human life from the crushing load of religion, daring to pass the flaming ramparts of the world, and by his victory putting men on an equality with heaven.<sup>1</sup> The laughter-loving Lucian two hundred years later grows gravely eloquent on the same theme.<sup>2</sup> And for generations the effect of the Epicurean check on orthodoxy is seen in the whole intellectual life of the Greek world, already predisposed in that direction.<sup>3</sup> The new schools of the Cynics and the Cyrenaics had alike shown the influence in their perfect freedom from all religious preoccupation, when they were not flatly dissenting from the popular beliefs. ANTISTHENES, the founder of the former school (fl. 400 B.C.), though a pupil of Sokrates, had been explicitly anti-polytheistic, and an opponent of anthropomorphism.<sup>4</sup> ARISTIPPOS of Cyrene, also a pupil of Sokrates, who a little later founded the Hedonic or Cyrenaic sect, seems to have put theology entirely aside. One of the later adherents of the school, THEODOROS, was like Diagoras labelled "the Atheist"<sup>5</sup> by reason of the directness of his opposition to religion; and in the Rome of Cicero he and Diagoras are the notorious atheists of history.<sup>6</sup> To Theodoros, who had a large following, is attributed an influence over the thought of Epicurus,<sup>7</sup> who, however, took the safer position of a verbal theism. The atheist is said to have been menaced by Athenian law in the time of Demetrius Phalereus, who protected him; and there is even a story that he was condemned to drink hemlock;<sup>8</sup> but he was not of the type that meets martyrdom, though he might go far to provoke it.<sup>9</sup> Roaming from court to court, he seems never to have stooped to flatter any of his entertainers. "You seem to me," said the steward of Lysimachos of Thrace to him on one occasion, "to be the only man who ignores both Gods and kings."<sup>10</sup>

In the same age the same freethinking temper is seen in STILPO of Megara (fl. 307), of the school of Euclides, who is said to have

<sup>1</sup> *De rerum natura*, i, 62-79.

<sup>2</sup> *Alexander seu Pseudomantis*, cc. 25, 38, 47, 61, cited by Wallace, pp. 249-50.

<sup>3</sup> The repute of the Epicureans for irreligion appears in the fact that when Romanized Athens had consented to admit foreigners to the once strictly Athenian mysteries of Eleusis, the Epicureans were excluded.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, v, 14; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathematicos*, ix, 51, 55.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. viii, §§ 7, 11-14 (86, 97-100). He was also nicknamed "the God." *Id.* and ch. xii, 5 (§ 116).

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* §§ 15, 16 (101-102).

<sup>8</sup> Diogenes, as last cited, § 12 (97).

<sup>9</sup> Professor Wallace's account of the court of Lysimachos of Thrace as a "favourite resort of emancipated freethinkers" (*Epicureanism*, p. 42) is hardly borne out by his authority, Diogenes Laërtius, who represents Lysimachos as unfriendly towards Theodoros. Hipparchia the Cynic, too, opposed rather than agreed with the atheist.

<sup>10</sup> Diog., last cit. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 43. Philo Judæus (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, c. 18; cp. Plutarch, *De Exilio*, c. 16) has a story of his repelling taunts about his banishment by comparing himself to Hercules, who was put ashore by the alarmed Argonauts because of his weight. But he is further made to boast extravagantly, and in doing so to speak as a believer in myths and deities. The testimony has thus little value.



been brought before the Areopagus for the offence of saying that the Pheidian statue of Athênê was "not a God," and to have met the charge with the jest that she was in reality not a God but a Goddess; whereupon he was exiled.<sup>1</sup> The stories told of him make it clear that he was an unbeliever, usually careful not to betray himself. Euclides, too, with his optimistic pantheism, was clearly a heretic; though his doctrine that evil is *non-ens*<sup>2</sup> later became the creed of some Christians. Yet another professed atheist was the witty BION of Borysthenes, pupil of Theodoros, of whom it is told, in a fashion familiar to our own time, that in sickness he grew pious through fear.<sup>3</sup> Among his positions was a protest or rather satire against the doctrine that the Gods punished children for the crimes of their fathers.<sup>4</sup> In the other schools, SPEUSIPPOS (fl. 343), the nephew of Plato, leant to monotheism;<sup>5</sup> STRATO of Lampsakos, the Peripatetic (fl. 290), called "the Naturalist," taught sheer pantheism, anticipating Laplace in declaring that he had no need of the action of the Gods to account for the making of the world;<sup>6</sup> DIKAIARCHOS (fl. 326-287), another disciple of Aristotle, denied the existence of separate souls, and the possibility of foretelling the future;<sup>7</sup> and ARISTO and CLEANTHES, disciples of Zeno, varied likewise in the direction of pantheism; the latter's monotheism, as expressed in his famous hymn, being one of several doctrines ascribed to him.<sup>8</sup>

Contemporary with Epicurus and Zeno and Pyrrho, too, was EVÊMEROS (Euhemerus), whose peculiar propaganda against Godism seems to imply theoretic atheism. As an atheist he was vilified in a manner familiar to modern ears, the Alexandrian poet Callimachus labelling him an "arrogant old man vomiting impious books."<sup>9</sup> His lost work, of which only a few extracts remain, undertook to prove that all the Gods had been simply famous men, deified after death; the proof, however, being by way of a fiction about old inscriptions found in an imaginary island.<sup>10</sup> As above noted,<sup>11</sup> the idea may have been borrowed from skeptical Phoenicians, the principle having already been monotheistically applied by the Bible-making Jews,<sup>12</sup> though, on the other hand, it had been

<sup>1</sup> Diog. bk. ii, ch. xii, § 5 (116).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ch. x, § 2 (106).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ch. xii, § 5 (117) and bk. iv, ch. vii, §§ 4, 9, 10 (52, 54, 55).

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *De defectu orac.* ch. 19. Bion seems to have made an impression on Plutarch, who often quotes him, though it be but to contradict him.

<sup>5</sup> Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* *ib.*; *Academics*, iv, 38.

<sup>7</sup> Cicero, *Tusculans*, i, 10, 31; *Academics*, ii, 39; and refs. in ed. Davis.

<sup>8</sup> Sir A. Grant's tr. of the hymn is given in Capes's *Stoicism* ("Chief Ancient Philosophies" series), 1880, p. 41; and the Greek text by Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 262. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.* i, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosoph.* i, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* bk. ii, ch. 2; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, ch. 23.

<sup>11</sup> P. 80.

<sup>12</sup> It may be noted that Diogenes of Babylon, a follower of Chrysippos, applied the principle to Greek mythology. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.* i, 15.

artistically and to all appearance uncritically acted on in the Homeric epopees. It may or may not then have been by way of deliberate or reasoning Evêmerism that certain early Greek and Roman deities were transformed, as we have seen, into heroes or *hetairai*.<sup>1</sup> In any case, the principle seems to have had considerable vogue in the later Hellenistic world; but with the effect rather of paving the way for new cults than of setting up scientific rationalism in place of the old ones. Quite a number of writers like Palaiphatos, without going so far as Evêmeros, sought to reduce myths to natural possibilities and events, by way of mediating between the credulous and the incredulous.<sup>2</sup> Their method is mostly the naïf one revived by the Abbé Banier in the eighteenth century of reducing marvels to verbal misconceptions. Thus for Palaiphatos the myth of Kerberos came from the facts that the city Trikarenos was commonly spoken of as a beautiful and great dog; and that Geryon, who lived there, had great dogs called Kerberoi; Actæon was "devoured by his dogs" in the sense that he neglected his affairs and wasted his time in hunting; the Amazons were shaved men, clad as were the women in Thrace, and so on.<sup>3</sup> Palaiphatos and the Herakleitos who also wrote *De Incredilibus* agree that Pasiphae's bull was a man named Tauros; and the latter writer similarly explains that Scylla was a beautiful *hetaira* with avaricious hangers-on, and that the harpies were ladies of the same profession. If the method seems childish, it is to be remembered that as regards the explanation of supernatural events it was adhered to by German theologians of a century ago; and that its credulity in incredulity is still to be seen in the current view that every narrative in the sacred books is to be taken as necessarily standing for a fact of some kind.

One of the inferrible effects of the Evêmerist method was to facilitate for the time the adoption of the Egyptian and eastern usage of deifying kings. It has been plausibly argued that this practice stands not so much for superstition as for skepticism, its opponents being precisely the orthodox believers, and its promoters those who had learned to doubt the actuality of the traditional Gods. Evêmerism would clinch such a tendency; and it is noteworthy that Evêmeros lived at the court of Kassander (319-296 B.C.) in a period in which every remaining member of the family of the deified Alexander had perished, mostly by violence; while the con-

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 80, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Grote, i, 371-74 and notes.

<sup>3</sup> Palaiphatos, *De Incredilibus*: *De Actæone*, *De Geryone*, *De Cerbero*, *De Amazonibus*, etc.



temporary Ptolemy I of Egypt received the title of *Sotér*, "Saviour," from the people of Rhodes.<sup>1</sup> It is to be observed, however, that while in the next generation Antiochus I of Syria received the same title, and his successor Antiochus II that of *Theos*, "God," the usage passes away; Ptolemy III being named merely *Evergetès*, "the Benefactor" (of the priests), and even Antiochus III only "the Great." Superstition was not to be ousted by a political exploitation of its machinery.<sup>2</sup>

In Athens the democracy, restored in a subordinate form by Kassander's opponent, Demetrius Poliorkètes (307 B.C.), actually tried to put down the philosophic schools, all of which, but the Aristotelian in particular, were anti-democratic, and doubtless also comparatively irreligious. Epicurus and some of his antagonists were exiled within a year of his opening his school (306 B.C.); but the law was repealed in the following year.<sup>3</sup> Theophrastos, the head of the Aristotelian school, was indicted in the old fashion for impiety, which seems to have consisted in denouncing animal sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> These repressive attempts, however, failed; and no others followed at Athens in that era; though in the next century the Epicureans seem to have been expelled from Lythos in Crete and from Messenê in the Peloponnesos, nominally for their atheism, in reality probably on political grounds.<sup>5</sup> Thus Zeno was free to publish a treatise in which, besides far out-going Plato in schemes for dragooning the citizens into an ideal life, he proposed a State without temples or statues of the Gods or law courts or gymnasia.<sup>6</sup> In the same age there is trace of "an interesting case of rationalism even in the Delphic oracle."<sup>7</sup> The people of the island of Astypalaia, plagued by hares or rabbits, solemnly consulted the oracle, which briefly advised them to keep dogs and take to hunting. About the same time we find Lachares, temporarily despot at Athens, plundering the shrine of Pallas of its gold.<sup>8</sup> Even in the general public there must have been a strain of surviving rationalism; for among the fragments of Menander (fl. 300), who, in general, seems to have

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Bevan (art. "The Deification of Kings in the Greek Cities" in *Eng. Histor. Rev.* Oct. 1901, p. 631) argues that the practice was not primarily eastern, but Greek. See, however, Herodotos, vii, 136; Arrian, *Anab. Alexand.* iv, 11; Q. Curtius, viii, 5-8; and Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, ch. 22, as to the normal attitude of the Greeks, even as late as Alexander.

<sup>2</sup> See Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, chs. 22, 23, for the later Hellenistic tone on the subject of apotheosis apart from the official practice of the empire.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, ch. xl. Bohn ed. iv, 353, and note.

<sup>4</sup> Mahaffy, *Greek Life*, pp. 133-35; Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. v, § 5 (§ 38).

<sup>5</sup> Wallace, *Epicureanism* (pp. 245-46), citing Suidas, s.v. *Epicurus*.

<sup>6</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, bk. vii, ch. i, § 28 (§ 33); cp. Origen, *Against Celsus*, bk. i, ch. 5; Clemens Alex. *Stromata*, bk. v, ch. ii.

<sup>7</sup> Mahaffy, as cited, p. 135, n.; Athenæus, ix, 63 (p. 400).

<sup>8</sup> (297 B.C.) Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 213; Pausanias, i, 29.

leaned to a well-bred orthodoxy,<sup>1</sup> there are some speeches savouring of skepticism and pantheism.<sup>2</sup>

It was in keeping with this general but mostly placid and non-polemic latitudinarianism that the New Academy, the second birth, or rather transformation, of the Platonic school, in the hands of ARKESILAOS and the great CARNEADES (213-129), and later of the Carthaginian CLITOMACHOS, should be marked by that species of skepticism thence called Academic—a skepticism which exposed the doubtfulness of current religious beliefs without going the Pyrrhonian length of denying that any beliefs could be proved, or even denying the existence of the Gods.

For the arguments of Carneades against the Stoic doctrine of immortality see Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, iii, 12, 17; and for his argument against theism see Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* ix, 172, 183. Mr. Benn pronounces this criticism of theology "the most destructive that has ever appeared, the armoury whence religious skepticism ever since has been supplied" (*The Philosophy of Greece*, etc., p. 258). This seems an over-statement. But it is just to say, as does Mr. Whittaker (*Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets*, 1911, p. 60; cp. p. 86), that "there has never been a more drastic attack than that of Carneades, which furnished Cicero with the materials for his second book, *On Divination*"; and, as does Prof. Martha (*Études Morales sur l'antiquité*, 1889, p. 77), that no philosophic or religious school has been able to ignore the problems which Carneades raised.

As against the essentially uncritical Stoics, the criticism of Carneades is sane and sound; and he has been termed by judicious moderns "the greatest skeptical mind of antiquity"<sup>3</sup> and "the Bayle of Antiquity";<sup>4</sup> though he seems to have written nothing.<sup>5</sup> There is such a concurrence of testimony as to the victorious power of his oratory and the invincible skill of his dialectic<sup>6</sup> that he must be reckoned one of the great intellectual and rationalizing forces of his day, triumphing as he did in the two diverse arenas of Greece and Rome. His disciple and successor Clitomachos said of him, with Cicero's assent, that he had achieved a labour of Hercules "in liberating our souls as it were of a fierce monster, credulity, conjecture, rash belief."<sup>7</sup> He was, in short, a mighty antagonist of thoughtless beliefs, clearing the ground for a rational life; and the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. G. Guizot, *Ménandre*, 1855, pp. 324-27, and App.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Guizot, pp. 327-31, and the fragments cited by Justin Martyr, *De Monarchia*, ch. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Whittaker, as cited, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Martha, as cited, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. iv, ch. ix, § 8 (§ 65).

<sup>6</sup> Diog. Laërt. bk. iv, ch. ix, § 4, 5 (§ 63); Noumenios in Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* xiv, 8; Cicero, *De Oratore*, ii, 38; Lucilius, cited by Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*

<sup>7</sup> Cicero, *Academics*, ii, 34.



fact that he was chosen with Diogenes the Peripatetic and Critolaos the Stoic to go to Rome to plead the cause of ruined Athens, mulcted in an enormous fine, proved that he was held in high honour at home. Athens, in short, was not at this stage "too superstitious." Unreasoning faith was largely discredited by philosophy.

On this basis, in a healthy environment, science and energy might have reared a constructive rationalism; and for a time astronomy, in the hands of ARISTARCHOS of Samos (third century B.C.), ERATOSTHENES of Cyrene, the second keeper of the great Alexandrian library (2nd cent. B.C.), and above all of HIPPARCHOS of Nikaia, who did most of his work in the island of Rhodes, was carried to a height of mastery which could not be maintained, and was re-attained only in modern times.<sup>1</sup> Thus much could be accomplished by "endowment of research" as practised by the Ptolemies at Alexandria; and after science had declined with the decline of their polity, and still further under Roman rule, the new cosmopolitanism of the second century of the empire reverted to the principle of intelligent evocation, producing under the Antonines the "Second" School of Alexandria.

But the social conditions remained fundamentally bad; and the earlier greatness was never recovered. "History records not one astronomer of note in the three centuries between Hipparchos and Ptolemy"; and Ptolemy (fl. 140 C.E.) not only retrograded into astronomical error, but elaborated on oriental lines a baseless fabric of astrology.<sup>2</sup> Other science mostly decayed likewise. The Greek world, already led to lower intellectual levels by the sudden ease and wealth opened up to it through the conquests of Alexander and the rule of his successors, was cast still lower by the Roman conquest. Pliny, extolling Hipparchos with little comprehension of his work, must needs pronounce him to have "dared a thing displeasing to God" in numbering the stars for posterity.<sup>3</sup> In the air of imperialism, stirred by no other, original thought could not arise; and the mass of the Greek-speaking populations, rich and poor, gravitated to the level of the intellectual<sup>4</sup> and emotional life of more or less well-fed slaves. In this society there rapidly

<sup>1</sup> Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* pp. 34-62; Narrien, *Histor. Account*, as cited, ch. xi; L. U. K. *Hist. of Astron.* ch. vi. It is noteworthy that Hipparchos, like so many of his predecessors, had some of his ideas from Babylonia. Strabo, *proem.* § 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ptolemy normally lumps unbelief in religion with all the vices of character. Cp. the *Tetrabiblos*, iii, 18 (paraphrase of Proclus).

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Nat.* ii, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian's dialogue *Philopseudes* gives a view of the superstitions of average Greeks in the second century of our era. Cp. Mr. Williams's note to the first *Dialogue of the Dead*, in his tr. p. 87.

multiplied private religious associations—*thiasoi*, *eranoi*, *orgeones*—in which men and women, denied political life, found new bonds of union and grounds of division in cultivating worships, mostly oriental, which stimulated the religious sense and sentiment.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the soil in which Christianity took root and flourished; while philosophy, after the freethinking epoch following on the fall of Athenian power, gradually reverted to one or other form of mystical theism or theosophy, of which the most successful was the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> When the theosophic Julian rejoiced that Epicureanism had disappeared,<sup>3</sup> he was exulting in a symptom of the intellectual decline that made possible the triumph of the faith he most opposed. Christianity furthered a decadence thus begun under the auspices of pagan imperialism; and "the fifth century of the Christian era witnessed an almost total extinction of the sciences in Alexandria"<sup>4</sup>—an admission which disposes of the dispute as to the guilt of the Arabs in destroying the great library.

Here and there, through the centuries, the old intellectual flame burns whitely enough: the noble figure of EPICTETUS in the first century of the new era, and that of the brilliant LUCIAN in the second, in their widely different ways remind us that the evolved faculty was still there if the circumstances had been such as to evoke it. MENIPPOS in the first century B.C. had played a similar part to that of Lucian, in whose freethinking dialogues he so often figures; but with less of subtlety and intellectuality. Lucian's was indeed a mind of the rarest lucidity; and the argumentation of his dialogue *Zeus Tragædos* covers every one of the main aspects of the theistic problem. There is no dubiety as to his atheistic conclusion, which is smilingly implicit in the reminder he puts in the mouth of Hermes, that, though a few men may adopt the atheistic view, "there will always be plenty of others who think the contrary—the majority of the Greeks, the ignorant many, the populace, and all the barbarians." But the moral doctrine of Epictetus is one of endurance and resignation; and the almost unvarying raillery of Lucian, making mere perpetual sport of the now moribund Olympian Gods, was hardly better fitted than the all-round skepticism of the school of SEXTUS EMPIRICUS to inspire positive and progressive thinking.

This latter school, described by Cicero as dispersed and extinct

<sup>1</sup> See M. Foucart's treatise, *Des assoc. relig. chez les Grecs*, 1873, 2e ptie.

<sup>2</sup> On the early tendency to orthodox conformity among the unbelieving Alexandrian scholars, see Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 260-61.

<sup>3</sup> Frag. cited by Wallace, p. 253.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 79.



in his day,<sup>1</sup> appears to have been revived in the first century by Ænesidemus, who taught at Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> It seems to have been through him in particular that the Pyrrhonic system took the clear-cut form in which it is presented at the close of the second century by the accomplished Sextus "Empiricus"—that is, the empirical (*i.e.*, experiential) physician,<sup>3</sup> who lived at Alexandria and Athens (fl. 175–205 C.E.). As a whole, the school continued to discredit dogmatism without promoting knowledge. Sextus, it is true, strikes acutely and systematically at ill-founded beliefs, and so makes for reason;<sup>4</sup> but, like the whole Pyrrhonian school, he has no idea of a method which shall reach sounder conclusions. As the Stoics had inculcated the control of the passions as such, so the skeptics undertook to make men rise above the prejudices and presuppositions which swayed them no less blindly than ever did their passions. But Sextus follows a purely skeptical method, never rising from the destruction of false beliefs to the establishment of true. His aim is *ataraxia*, a philosophic calm of non-belief in any dogmatic affirmation beyond the positing of phenomena as such; and while such an attitude is beneficently exclusive of all fanaticism, it unfortunately never makes any impression on the more intolerant fanatic, who is shaken only by giving him a measure of critical truth in place of his error. And as Sextus addressed himself to the students of philosophy, not to the simple believers in the Gods, he had no wide influence.<sup>5</sup> Avowedly accepting the normal view of moral obligations while rejecting dogmatic theories of their basis, the doctrine of the strict skeptics had the effect, from Pyrrho onwards, of giving the same acceptance to the common religion, merely rejecting the philosophic pretence of justifying it. Taken by themselves, the arguments against current theism in the third book of the *Hypotyposes*<sup>6</sup> are unanswerable; but, when bracketed with other arguments against the ordinary belief in causation, they had the effect of leaving theism on a par with that belief. Against religious beliefs in particular, therefore, they had no wide destructive effect.

Lucian, again, thought soundly and sincerely on life; his praise of the men whose memories he respected, as Epicurus and Demonax (if the Life of Demonax attributed to him be really his), is grave and heartfelt; and his ridicule of the discredited Gods was perfectly right

<sup>1</sup> *De Oratore*, iii, 17; *De Finibus*, ii, 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> See Saisset, *Le Scepticisme*, 1865, pp. 22–27, for a careful discussion of dates.

<sup>3</sup> His own claim was to be of the "methodical" school. *Hypotyp.* i, 34.

<sup>4</sup> See his doctrine expounded by Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, i, 332 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Owen, p. 349.

<sup>6</sup> These seem to be derived from Carneades. Cp. Ueberweg, i, 217.

so far as it went. It is certain that the unbelievers and the skeptics alike held their own with the believers in the matter of right living.<sup>1</sup> In the period of declining pagan belief, the maxim that superstition was a good thing for the people must have wrought a quantity and a kind of corruption that no amount of ridicule of religion could ever approach. Polybius (fl. 150 B.C.) agrees with his complacent Roman masters that their greatness is largely due to the carefully cultivated superstition of their populace, and charges with rashness and folly those who would uproot the growth;<sup>2</sup> and Strabo, writing under Tiberius—unless it be a later interpolator of his work—confidently lays down the same principle of governmental deceit,<sup>3</sup> though in an apparently quite genuine passage he vehemently protests the incredibility of the traditional tales about Apollo.<sup>4</sup> So far had the doctrine evolved since Plato preached it. But to countervail it there needed more than a ridicule which after all reached only the class who had already cast off the beliefs derided, leaving the multitude unenlightened. The lack of the needed machinery of enlightenment was, of course, part of the general failure of the Græco-Roman civilization; and no one man's efforts could have availed, even if any man of the age could have grasped the whole situation. Rather the principle of esoteric enlightenment, the ideal of secret knowledge, took stronger hold as the mass grew more and more comprehensively superstitious. Even at the beginning of the Christian era the view that Homer's deities were allegorical beings was freshly propounded in the writings of Herakleides and Cornutus (Phornutus); but it served only as a kind of mystical *Gnosis*, on all fours with Christian Gnosticism, and was finally taken up by Neo-Platonists, who were no nearer rationalism for adopting it.<sup>5</sup>

So with the rationalism to which we have so many uneasy or hostile allusions in Plutarch. We find him resenting the scoffs of Epicureans at the doctrine of Providence, and recoiling from the "abyss of impiety"<sup>6</sup> opened up by those who say that "Aphrodite is simply desire, and Hermes eloquence, and the Muses the arts and

<sup>1</sup> "The general character of the Greek Skeptics from Sokrates to Sextos is quite unexceptionable" (Owen, *Evenings*, i, 352).

<sup>2</sup> Polybius, bk. vi, ch. lvi. Cp. bk. xvi, Frag. 5 (12), where he speaks impatiently of the miracle-stories told of certain cults, and, repeating his opinion that some such stories are useful for preserving piety among the people, protests that they should be kept within bounds.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. i, ch. ii, § 8. Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, ch. 8) puts the more decent principle that all the apparent absurdities have good occult reasons.

<sup>4</sup> Bk. ix, ch. iii, § 12. Cp. bk. x, ch. iii, § 23. The hand of an interpolator frequently appears in Strabo (*e.g.*, bk. ix, ch. ii, § 40; ch. iii, § 5); and the passage cited in bk. i is more in the style of the former than of the latter.

<sup>5</sup> See Dr. Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 60–64, notes; also above, pp. 143 and 161, note.

<sup>6</sup> *De defect. orac.* c. 19; *Isis and Osiris*, ch. 67.



sciences, and Athênê wisdom, and Dionysos merely wine, Hephaistos fire, and Dêmêtêr corn";<sup>1</sup> and in his essay *On Superstition* he regretfully recognizes the existence of many rational atheists, confessing that their state of mind is better than that of the superstitious who abound around him, with their "impure purifications and unclean cleansings," their barbaric rites, and their evil Gods. But the unbelievers, with their keen contempt for popular folly, availed as little against it as Plutarch himself, with his doctrine of a just mean. The one effectual cure would have been widened knowledge; and of such an evolution the social conditions did not permit.

To return to a state of admiration for the total outcome of Greek thought, then, it is necessary to pass from the standpoint of simple analysis to that of comparison. It is in contrast with the relatively slight achievement of the other ancient civilizations that the Greek, at its height, still stands out for posterity as a wonderful growth. That which, tried by the test of ideals, is as a whole only one more tragic chapter in the record of human frustration, yet contains within it light and leading as well as warning; and for long ages it was as a lost Paradise to a darkened world. It has been not untruly said that "the Greek spirit is immortal, because it was free";<sup>2</sup> free not as science can now conceive freedom, but in contrast with the spiritual bondage of Jewry and Egypt, the half-barbaric tradition of imperial Babylon, and the short flight of mental life in Rome. Above all, it was ever in virtue of the freedom that the high things were accomplished; and it was ever the falling away from freedom, the tyranny either of common ignorance or of mindless power, that wrought decadence. There is a danger, too, of injustice in comparing Athens with later States. When a high authority pronounces that "the religious views of the Demos were of the narrowest kind,"<sup>3</sup> he is not to be gainsaid; but the further verdict that "hardly any people has sinned more heavily against the liberty of science" is unduly lenient to Christian civilization. The heaviest sins of that against science, indeed, lie at the door of the Catholic Church; but to make that an exoneration of the modern "peoples" as against the ancient would be to load the scales. And even apart from the Catholic Church, which practically suppressed all science for a thousand years, the attitude of Protestant leaders and Protestant peoples, from Luther down to the second half of the

<sup>1</sup> *De Amore*, c. 13; *Isis and Osiris*, chs. 66, 67; and *De defect. orac.* c. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, *Gesch. der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im erst. Jahrh.* 1847, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 1892, p. 276. Cp. 2nd ed. p. 294.

nineteenth century, has been one of hatred and persecution towards all science that clashed with the sacred books.<sup>1</sup> In the Greek world there was more scientific discussion in the three hundred years down to Epicurus than took place in the whole of Christian Europe in thirteen hundred; and the amount of actual violence used towards innovators in the pagan period, though lamentable enough, was trifling in comparison with that recorded in Christian history, to say nothing of the frightful annals of witch-burning, to which there is no parallel in civilized heathen history. The critic, too, goes on to admit that, while "Sokrates, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle fell victims in different degrees to the bigotry of the populace," "of course their offence was political rather than religious. They were condemned not as heretics, but as innovators in the *state religion*." And, as we have seen, all three of the men named taught in freedom for many years till political faction turned popular bigotry against them. The true measure of Athenian narrowness is not to be reached, therefore, without keeping in view the long series of modern outrages and maledictions against the makers and introducers of new machinery, and the multitude of such episodes as the treatment of Priestley in Christian Birmingham, little more than a century ago. On a full comparison the Greeks come out not ill.

It was, in fact, impossible that the Greeks should either stifle or persecute science or freethought as it was either stifled or persecuted by ancient Jews (who had almost no science by reason of their theology) or by modern Christians, simply because the Greeks had no anti-scientific hieratic *literature*. It remains profoundly significant for science that the ancient civilization which on the smallest area evolved the most admirable life, which most completely transcended all the sources from which it originally drew, and left a record by which men are still charmed and taught, was a civilization as nearly as might be without Sacred Books, without an organized priesthood, and with the largest measure of democratic freedom that the ancient world ever saw.

<sup>1</sup> It is to be presumed that Dr. Burnet, when penning his estimate, had not in memory such a record as Dr. A. D. White's *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology*.



## CHAPTER VI

## FREETHOUGHT IN ANCIENT ROME

## § 1

THE Romans, so much later than the Greeks in their intellectual development, were in some respects peculiarly apt—in the case of their upper class—to accept freethinking ideas when Greek rationalism at length reached them. After receiving from their Greek neighbours in Southern Italy, in the pre-historic period, the germs of higher culture, in particular the alphabet, they rather retrograded than progressed for centuries, the very alphabet degenerating for lack of literary activity<sup>1</sup> in the absence of any culture class, and under the one-idea'd rule of the landowning aristocracy, whose bent to military aggression was correlative to the smallness of the Roman facilities for commerce. In the earlier ages nearly everything in the nature of written lore was a specialty of a few priests, and was limited to their purposes, which included some keeping of annals.<sup>2</sup> The use of writing for purposes of family records seems to have been the first literary development among the patrician laity.<sup>3</sup> In the early republican period, however, the same conditions of relative poverty, militarism, and aristocratic emulation prevented any development even of the priesthood beyond the rudimentary stage of a primitive civic function; and the whole of these conditions in combination kept the Roman Pantheon peculiarly shadowy, and the Roman mythology abnormally undeveloped.

The character of the religion of the Romans has been usually explained in the old manner, in terms of their particular "genius" and lack of genius. On this view the Romans primordially tended to do whatever they did—to be slightly religious in one period, and highly so in another. Teuffel

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, bk. i, ch. 14 (Eng. tr. 1894, vol. i, pp. 282-83). Mommsen's view of the antiquity of writing among the Latins (p. 280) is highly speculative. He places its introduction about or before 1000 B.C.; yet he admits that they got their alphabet from the Greeks, and he can show no Greek contacts for that period. Cp. pp. 167-68 (ch. x). Schwegler (*Römische Geschichte*, 1853, i, 36) more reasonably places the period after that of the Etruscan domination, while recognizing the Greek origin of the script. Cp. Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, pp. 26-28; Pelham, *Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Schwegler, i, ch. i, § 12; Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Lit.* ed. Schwabe, Eng. tr. 1900, i, 100-101, 104-10.

<sup>3</sup> Teuffel, i, 110-11.

quite unconsciously reduces the theorem to absurdity in two phrases: "As long as the peculiar character of the Roman nation remained unaltered".....(*Hist. of Roman Lit.* ed. Schwabe, Eng. tr. 1900, i, 2): "the peculiar Roman character had now come to an end, and for ever" (*id.* p. 123). By no writer has the subject been more unphilosophically treated than by Mommsen, whose chapter on Roman religion (vol. i, ch. xii) is an insoluble series of contradictions. (See the present writer's *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 115-17.) M. Boissier contradicts himself hardly less strangely, alternately pronouncing the Latin religion timid and confident, prostrate and dignified (*La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, 4e édit. i, 7, 8, 26, 28). Both writers ascribe every characteristic of Roman religion to the character of "the Romans" in the lump—a method which excludes any orderly conception. It must be abandoned if there is to be any true comprehension of the subject.

Other verdicts of this kind by Ihne, Jevons, and others, will no better bear examination. (See *Christianity and Mythology*, pt. i, ch. iii, § 3.) Dr. Warde Fowler, the latest English specialist to handle the question, confidently supports the strange thesis (dating from Schwartz) that the multitude of deities and daimons of the early Latins were never thought of as personal, or as possessing sex, until Greek mythology and sculpture set the fashion of such conceptions, whereupon "this later and foreign notion of divinity so completely took possession of the minds of the Romans of the cosmopolitan city that Varro is the only writer who has preserved the tradition of the older way of thinking" (*The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, 1911, p. 147). That is to say, the conception of the Gods in the imageless period was an "older way of thinking," in which deities called by male and female names, and often addressed as *Pater* and *Mater*, were not really thought of as anthropomorphic at all! How the early Romans conceived their non-imaged deities Dr. Fowler naturally does not attempt to suggest. We get merely the unreasoned and unexplained negative formula that "we may take it as certain that even the greater deities of the calendar, Janus, Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, and Vesta, were not thought of as existing in any sense in human form, nor as personal beings having any human characteristics. The early Romans were destitute of mythological fancy....."

Either, then, the early Romans were psychologically alien to every other primitive or barbaric people, as known to modern anthropology, or, by parity of reasoning, all anthropomorphism is the spontaneous creation of sculptors, who had no ground whatever in previous psychosis for making images of Gods. The Greeks, on this view, had no anthropomorphic notion of their



deities until suddenly sculptors began to make images of them, whereupon everybody promptly and obediently anthropomorphized!

The way out of this hopeless theorem is indicated for Dr. Fowler by his own repeated observation that the Roman *jus divinum*, in which he finds so little sign of normal "mythological fancy," represented the deliberately restrictive action of an official priesthood for whom all *religio* was a kind of State magic or "medicine." He expressly insists (p. 24) on "the wonderful work done by the early authorities from the State in *eliminating* from their rule of worship (*jus divinum*) almost all that was magical, barbarous, or, as later Romans would have called it, superstitious" (Lect. ii, p. 24; cp. Lect. iii.). He even inclines to the view that the patrician religion "was really the religion of an invading race, like that of the Achæans in Greece, engrafted on the religion of a primitive and less civilized population" (pp. viii, 23). This thesis is not necessary to the rebuttal of his previous negation; but it obviously resists it, unless we are to make the word "Roman" apply only to patricians. An invading tribe might, in the case of Rome as in that of the Homeric Greeks, abandon ordinary and *localized* primitive beliefs which it had held in its previous home, and thereafter be officially reluctant to recognize the local superstitions of its conquered *plebs*.

But the Roman case can be understood without assuming any continuity of racial divergence. Livy shows us that the Latin peasantry were, if possible, *more* given to superstitious fears and panics than any other, constantly reporting portents and *prodigia* which called for State ritual, and embarrassing military policy by their apprehensions. A patrician priesthood, concerned above all things for public polity, would in such circumstances naturally seek to minimize the personal side of the popular mythology, treating all orders of divinity as mere classes of powers to be appeased. The fact (*id.* p. 29) that among the early Romans, as among other primitives, women were rigidly excluded from certain *sacra* points to a further ground for keeping out of official sight the sex life of the Gods. But the very ritual formula of the Fratres Arvales, *Sive deus sive dea* (p. 149), proves that the deities were habitually thought of as personal, and male or female.

Dr. Fowler alternately and inconsistently argues that the "vulgar mind was ready to think of God-couples" (p. 152), and that the conjunctions of masculine and feminine names in the Roman Pantheon "do not represent *popular* ideas of the deities, but ritualistic forms of invocation" (p. 153). The answer is that the popular mind is the matrix of mythology, and that if a State ritual given to minimizing mythology recognized a given habit of myth-making it was presumably abundant outside. In

short, the whole academic process of reducing early Roman religion to something unparalleled in anthropology is as ill-founded in the data as it is repugnant to scientific thought.

The differentiation of Greek and Roman religion is to be explained by the culture-history of the two peoples; and that, in turn, was determined by their geographical situation and their special contacts. Roman life was made systematically agricultural and militarist by its initial circumstances, where Greek life in civilized Asia Minor became industrial, artistic, and literary. The special "genius" of Homer, or of various members of an order of bards developed by early colonial-feudal Grecian conditions, would indeed count for much by giving permanent artistic definiteness of form to the Greek Gods, where the early Romans, leaving all the vocal arts mainly to the conservative care of their women and children as something beneath adult male notice, missed the utilization of poetic genius among them till they were long past the period of romantic simplicity (cp. Mommsen, bk. i, ch. 15; Eng. tr. 1894, vol. i, pp. 285-300). Hence the *comparative* abstractness of their unsung Gods (cp. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 225-28, and refs.; Boissier, *La religion romaine*, as cited, i, 8), and the absence of such a literary mythology as was evolved and preserved in Greece by local patriotisms under the stimulus of the great epopees and tragedies. The doctrine that "the Italian is deficient in the passion of the heart," and that *therefore* "Italian" literature has "never produced a true epos or a genuine drama" (Mommsen, ch. 15, vol. i, p. 284), is one of a thousand samples of the fallacy of explaining a phenomenon in terms of itself. Teuffel with equal futility affirms the contrary: "Of the various kinds of poetry, *dramatic poetry* seems after all to be most in conformity with the character of the Roman people" (as cited, p. 3; cp. p. 28 as to the epos). On the same verbalist method, Mommsen decides as to the Etruscan religion that "the mysticism and barbarism of their worship had their foundation in the essential character of the Etruscan people" (ch. 12, p. 232). Schwegler gives a more objective view of the facts, but, like other German writers whom he cites, errs in speaking of early deities like Picus as "only aspects of Mars," not realizing that Mars is merely the surviving or developed deity of that type. He also commits the conventional error of supposing that the early Roman religion is fundamentally monotheistic or pantheistic, because the multitudinous "abstract" deities are "only" aspects of the general force of Nature. The notion that the Romans did not anthropomorphize their deities like all other peoples is a surprising fallacy.

Thus when Rome, advancing in the career of conquest, had



developed a large aristocratic class, living a city life, with leisure for intellectual interests, and had come in continuous contact with the conquered Grecian cities of Southern Italy, its educated men underwent a literary and a rationalistic influence at the same time, and were the more ready to give up all practical belief in their own slightly-defined Gods when they found Greeks explaining away theirs. Here we see once more the primary historic process by which men are led to realize the ill-founded character of their hereditary creeds: the perception is indirectly set up by the reflective recognition of the creeds of others, and all the more readily when the others give a critical lead. Indeed, Greek rationalism was already old when the Romans began to develop a written and artistic literature: it had even taken on the popular form given to it by Evêmeros a century before the Romans took it up. Doubtless there was skepticism among the latter before Ennius: such a piece of religious procedure as the invention of a God of Silver (*Argentinus*), son of the God of Copper (*Æsculanus*), on the introduction of a silver currency, 269 B.C., must have been smiled at by the more intelligent.<sup>1</sup>

Mommsen states (ii, 70) that at this epoch the Romans kept "equally aloof from superstition and unbelief," but this is inaccurate on both sides. The narrative of Livy exhibits among the people a boundless and habitual superstition. The records of absurd prodigies of every sort so throng his pages that he himself repeatedly ventures to make light of them. Talking oxen, skies on fire, showers of flesh, crows and mice eating gold, rivers flowing blood, showers of milk—such were the reports chronically made to the Roman government by its pious subjects, and followed by anxious religious ceremonies at Rome (cp. Livy, iii, 5, 10; x, 27; xi, 28–35; xxiv, 44; xxvii, 4, 11, 23, etc., etc. In the index to Drakenborch's Livy there are over five columns of references to *prodigia*). On the other hand, though superstition was certainly the rule, there are traces of rationalism. On the next page after that cited, Mommsen himself admits that the faith of the people had already been shaken by the interference allowed to the priestly colleges in

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, bk. ii, ch. 8, Eng. tr. ii, 70. Such creation of deities by mere abstraction of things and functions had been the rule in the popular as distinguished from the civic religion. Cp. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv, 16, 23; vi, 9, etc. It was the concomitant of the tendency noted by Livy: *adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio inserit deos* (xxvii, 23). But the practice was not peculiar to the Romans, for among the Greeks were Gods or Goddesses of Wealth, Peace, Mercy, Shame, Fortune, Rumour, Energy, Action, Persuasion, Consolation, Desire, Yearning, Necessity, Force, etc. See Pausanias *passim*. The inference is that the more specific deities in all religions, with personal names, are the product of sacerdotal institutions or of poetic or other art. M. Boissier (i, 5), like Ihne, takes it for granted that the multitude of deified abstractions had no legends; but this is unwarranted. They may have had many; but there were no poets to sing, or priests to preserve and ritualize them.

political matters; and in another chapter (bk. ii, ch. 13; vol. ii, 112) he recalls that a consul of the Claudian gens had jested openly at the auspices in the first Punic war, 249 B.C. The story is told by Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, ii, 3, and Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 2. The sacred poultry, on being let out of their coop on board ship, would not feed, so that the auspices could not be taken; whereupon the consul caused them to be thrown into the water, *etiam per jocum Deos inridens*, saying they might drink if they would not eat. His colleague Junius in the same war also disregarded the auspices; and in both cases, according to Balbus the Stoic in Cicero's treatise, the Roman fleets were duly defeated; whereupon Claudius was condemned by the people, and Junius committed suicide. Cp. Valerius Maximus, l. i, c. iv, § 3.

Such stories would fortify the age-long superstition as to auspices and omens, which was in full force among Greek commanders as late as Xenophon, when many cultured Greeks were rationalists. But it was mainly a matter of routine, in a sphere where freethought is slow to penetrate. There was probably no thought of jesting when, in the year 193 B.C., after men had grown weary alike of earthquakes and of the religious services prescribed on account of them; and after the consuls had been worn out by sacrifices and expiations, it was decreed that "if on any day a service had been arranged for a reported earthquake, no one should report another on that day" (Livy, xxxiv, 55). Cato, who would never have dreamt of departing from a Roman custom, was the author of the saying (Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 24) that haruspices might well laugh in each other's faces. He had in view the Etruscan practice, being able to see the folly of that, though not of his own. Cp. Mommsen, iii, 116. As to the Etruscan origin of the haruspices, in distinction from the augurs, see Schweigler, i, 276, 277; Ihne, Eng. ed. i, 82–83, note; and O. Müller as there cited.

But it is with the translation of the *Sacred History* of Evêmeros by ENNIUS, about 200 B.C., that the literary history of Roman freethought begins. In view of the position of Ennius as a teacher of Greek and *belles lettres* (he being of Greek descent, and born in Calabria), it cannot be supposed that he would openly translate an anti-religious treatise without the general acquiescence of his aristocratic patrons. Cicero says of him that he "followed" as well as translated Evêmeros;<sup>1</sup> and his favourite Greek dramatists were the freethinking Euripides and Epicharmos, from both of whom he translated.<sup>2</sup> The popular superstitions, in particular those of sooth-

<sup>1</sup> *De natura Deorum*, i, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Schuckburgh (*History of Rome*, 1894, p. 401, note) cites a translated passage in his fragments (Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 50; *De nat. Deorum*, iii, 32), putting the Epicurean view that the Gods clearly did not govern human affairs, "which he probably would have softened if he had not agreed with it." Cp. Mommsen, iii, 113 (bk. ii, ch. 13).



saying and divination, he sharply attacked.<sup>1</sup> If his patrons all the while stood obstinately to the traditional usages of official augury and ritual, it was in the spirit of political conservatism that belonged to their class and their civic ideal, and on the principle that religion was necessary for the control of the multitude. In Etruria, where the old culture had run largely to mysticism and soothsaying on quasi-oriental lines, the Roman government took care to encourage it, by securing the theological monopoly of the upper-class families,<sup>2</sup> and thus set up a standing hot-bed of superstition. In the same spirit they adopted from time to time popular cults from Greece, that of the Phrygian Mother of the Gods being introduced in the year 204 B.C. The attempt (186 B.C.) to suppress the Bacchic mysteries, of which a distorted and extravagant account<sup>3</sup> is given by Livy, was made on grounds of policy and not of religion; and even if the majority of the senate had not been disposed to encourage the popular appetite for emotional foreign worships, the multitude of their own accord would have introduced the latter, in resentment of the exclusiveness of the patricians in keeping the old domestic and national cults in their own hands.<sup>4</sup> As new eastern conquests multiplied the number of foreign slaves and residents in Rome, the foreign worships multiplied with them; and with the worships came such forms of freethought as then existed in Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt. In resistance to these, as to the orgiastic worships, political and religious conservatism for a time combined. In 173 B.C. the Greek Epicurean philosophers Alkaïos and Philiskos were banished from the city,<sup>5</sup> a step which was sure to increase the interest in Epicureanism. Twelve years later the Catonic party carried a curt decree in the Senate against the Greek rhetors,<sup>6</sup> *uti Romae ne essent*; and in 155 the interest aroused by Carneades and the other Athenian ambassadors led to their being suddenly sent home, on

<sup>1</sup> *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, p. 226; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i, 58.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen, i, 301; ii, 71; iii, 117 (bk. i, ch. 15: bk. ii, ch. 8; bk. iii, ch. 13). Cicero, *De Div.* i, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Livy, xxix, 18. Dr. Warde Fowler (*Religious Experience of the Roman People*, p. 346) censures Mr. Heitland for calling Livy's story "an interesting romance" (*Hist. of Rom. Rep.* ii, 229 note); remarking that "it is the fashion now to reject as false whatever is surprising," and adding (p. 347): "It is certain, from the steps taken by the government ..... that it is in the main a true account." It may suffice to ask whether Dr. Fowler believes in all or any of the *prodigia* mentioned by Livy because the government "took steps" about them.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 39, 346.

<sup>5</sup> Teuffel, i, 122.

<sup>6</sup> Aulus Gellius (xv, 11) says the edict was *de philosophis et de rhetoribus Latinis*, but the *senatus-consultum*, as given by him, does not contain the adjective; and he goes on to tell that *aliquot deinde annis post*—really sixty-nine years later—the censors fulminated against *homines qui novum genus disciplinae instituerunt..... eos sibi nomen imponisse Latinas rhetoras*. The former victims, then, were presumably Greek. Cp. Shuckburgh, p. 520; and Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, 1866, ii, 146. Professor Pelham (*Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 179, note) mistakenly cites the *senatus-consultum* as containing the word "*Latini*." The reading *Latinis* in Gellius's own phrase has long been suspected. See ed. Frederic and Gronov, 1706.

Cato's urging.<sup>1</sup> It seems certain that Carneades made converts to skepticism, among them being the illustrious Scipio Æmilianus.<sup>2</sup> In the sequel the Greeks multiplied, especially after the fall of Macedonia,<sup>3</sup> and in the year 92 we find the censors vetoing the practices of the *Latin* rhetors as an unpleasing novelty,<sup>4</sup> thus leaving the Greeks in possession of the field.<sup>5</sup> But, the general social tendency being downwards, it was only a question of time when the rationalism should be overgrown by the superstition. In 137 there had been another vain edict against the foreign soothsayers and the worshippers of Sabazius;<sup>6</sup> but it was such cults that were to persist, while the old Roman religion passed away,<sup>7</sup> save insofar as it had a non-literary survival among the peasantry.

## § 2

While self-government lasted, rationalism among the cultured classes was fairly common. The great poem of LUCRETIVS, *On the Nature of Things*, with its enthusiastic exposition of the doctrine of Epicurus, remains to show to what a height of sincerity and ardour a Roman freethinker could rise. No Greek utterance that has come down to us makes so direct and forceful an attack as his on religion as a social institution. He is practically the first systematic free-thinking propagandist; so full is he of his purpose that after his stately prologue to *alma Venus*, who is for him but a personification of the genetic forces of Nature, he plunges straight into his impeachment of religion as a foul tyranny from which thinking men were first freed by Epicurus. The sonorous verse vibrates with an indignation such as Shelley's in *Queen Mab*: religion is figured as *horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans*; a little further on its deeds are denounced as *scelerosa atque impia*, "wicked and impious," the religious term being thus turned against itself; and a moving picture of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia justifies the whole. "To so much of evil could religion persuade." It is with a bitter consciousness of the fatal hold of the hated thing on most men's ignorant imagination that he goes on to speak of the fears<sup>8</sup> so assiduously wrought upon by the *vates*, and to set up with strenuous speed the vividly-imagined system of Epicurean science by which he

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Cato*, c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De Repub. passim*, ed. Halm.

<sup>3</sup> Polybius, xxxii, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Suetonius, *De claris rhetoribus*.

<sup>5</sup> See in Cicero, *De Oratore*, iii, 24, the account by the censor Crassus of his reasons for preferring the Greek rhetors.

<sup>6</sup> Valerius Maximus, i, 3, 1.

<sup>7</sup> The culture history of the republican period, as partially recovered by recent archaeology, shows a process of dissolution and replacement from a remote period. Cp. Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, ch. ii, notably p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *De rerum natura*, i, 50-135; cp. v, 1166.



seeks to fortify his friend against them. That no thing comes from nothing, or lapses into nothing; that matter is eternal; that all things proceed "without the Gods" by unchanging law, are his insistent themes; and for nigh two thousand years a religious world has listened with a reluctant respect. His influence is admitted to have been higher and nobler than that of the religion he assailed.

"Lucretius was the first not only to reveal a new power, beauty, and mystery in the world, but also to communicate to poetry a speculative impulse, opening up, with a more impassioned appeal than philosophy can do, the great questions underlying human life—such as the truth of all religious tradition, the position of man in the universe, and the attitude of mind and course of conduct demanded by that position." (Sellar, *Roman Poets of the Republic: Virgil*, 1877, p. 199.)

"In the eyes of Lucretius all worship seemed prompted by fear and based on ignorance of natural law.....But it is nevertheless true that Lucretius was a great religious poet. He was a prophet, in deadly earnest, calling men to renounce their errors both of thought and conduct.....We may be certain that he was absolutely convinced of the truth of all that he wrote." (W. Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, 1909, pp. 327-28.)

And yet throughout the whole powerful poem we have testimony to the pupillary character of Roman thought in relation to Grecian. However much the earnest student may outgo his masters in emphasis and zeal of utterance, he never transcends the original irrationality of asserting that "the Gods" exist; albeit it is their glory to do nothing. It is in picturing their ineffable peace that he reaches some of his finest strains of song,<sup>1</sup> though in the next breath he repudiates every idea of their control of things cosmic or human. He swears by their sacred breasts, *proh sancta deum pectora*, and their life of tranquil joy, when he would express most vehemently his scorn of the thought that it can be they who hurl the lightnings which haply destroy their own temples and strike down alike the just and the unjust. It is a survival of a quite primitive conception of deity,<sup>2</sup> alongside of an advanced anti-religious criticism.

The explanation of the anomaly seems to be twofold. In the first place, Roman thought had not lived long enough—it never did live long enough—to stand confidently on its own feet and criticize its Greek teachers. In Cicero's treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, the Epicurean and the Stoic in turn retail their doctrine as they had

<sup>1</sup> ii, 646-50 (the passage cited by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons in one of the Bradlaugh debates, with a confession of its noble beauty); and again ii, 1090-1105, and iii, 18-22.

<sup>2</sup> See *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 52-57.

it from their school, the Epicurean affirming the existence and the inaction of the Gods with equal confidence, and repeating without a misgiving the formula about the Gods having not bodies but quasi-bodies, with not blood but quasi-blood; the Stoic, who stands by most of the old superstitions, professing to have his philosophical reasons for them. Each sectarian derides the beliefs of the other; neither can criticize his own creed. It would seem as if in the habitually militarist society, even when it turns to philosophy, there must prevail a militarist ethic and psychosis in the intellectual life, each man choosing a flag or a leader and fighting through thick and thin on that side henceforth. On the other hand, the argumentation of the high-priest Cotta in the dialogue turns to similar purpose the kindred principle of civic tradition. He argues in turn against the Epicurean's science and the Stoic's superstition, contesting alike the claim that the Gods are indifferent and the claim that they govern; and in the end he brazenly affirms that, while he sees no sound philosophic argument for religious beliefs and practices, he thinks it is justifiable to maintain them on the score of prescription or ancestral example. Here we have the senatorial or conservative principle,<sup>1</sup> availing itself of the skeptical dialectic of Carneades. In terms of that ideal, which prevailed alike with believers and indifferentists,<sup>2</sup> and mediated between such rival schools as the Epicurean and Stoic, we may partly explain the Epicurean theorem itself. For the rest, it is to be understood as an outcome partly of surviving sentiment and partly of forced compromise in the case of its Greek framers, and of the habit of partizan loyalty in the case of its Roman adherents.

In the arguments of Cotta, the unbelieving high-priest, we presumably have the doctrine of CICERO himself,<sup>3</sup> who in the *Academica* avows his admiration of Carneades's reasoning, and in the *De Divinatione* follows it, but was anchored by officialism to State usage. With his vacillating character, his forensic habit, and his genius for mere speech, he could not but betray his own lack of intellectual conviction; and such weakness as his found its natural support in the principle of use and wont, the practice and tradition of the commonwealth. On that footing he had it in him to boast

<sup>1</sup> See the account of the doctrine of the high-priest Scaevola, preserved by Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, iv, 27. He and Varro (*id.* iv, 31; vi, 5-7) agreed in rejecting the current myths, but insisted on the continued civic acceptance of them. On the whole question compare Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 47-63.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the satirist LUCILIUS, who ridiculed the popular beliefs, was capable, in his capacity of patriot, of crying out against the lack of respect shown to religion and the Gods (Boissier, pp. 51-52). The purposive insincerity set up in their thinking by such men must, of course, have been injurious to character.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the *De Divinatione*, i, 2.



like any pedigreed patrician of the historic religiousness of Rome, he himself the while being devoid of all confident religious belief. His rhetoric on the subject can hardly be otherwise estimated than as sheer hustings hypocrisy. Doubtless he gave philosophic colour to his practice by noting the hopeless conflict of the creeds of the positive sects, very much as in our own day conservative dialectic finds a ground for religious conformity in the miscarriages of the men of science.<sup>1</sup> But Cicero does not seem even to have had a religious sentiment to cover the nakedness of his political opportunism. Not only does he in the *Tusculan Disputations* put aside in the Platonic fashion all the Homeric tales which anthropomorphize and discredit the Gods;<sup>2</sup> but in his treatise *On Divination* he shows an absolute disbelief in all the recognized practices, including the augury which he himself officially practised; and his sole excuse is that they are to be retained "on account of popular opinion and of their great public utility."<sup>3</sup> As to prodigies, he puts in germ the argument later made famous by Hume: either the thing could happen (in the course of nature) or it could not; if it could not, the story is false; if it could, *non esse mirandum*—there is no miracle.<sup>4</sup> In his countless private letters, again, he shows not a trace of religious feeling,<sup>5</sup> or even of interest in the questions which in his treatises he declares to be of the first importance.<sup>6</sup> Even the doctrine of immortality, to which he repeatedly returns, seems to have been for him, as for so many Christians since, only a forensic theme, never a source of the private consolation he ascribed to it.<sup>7</sup> In Cicero's case, in fine, we reach the conclusion that either the noted inconstancy of his character pervaded all his thinking, or that his gift for mere utterance, and his demoralizing career as an advocate, overbore in him all sincere reflection. But, indeed, the practical subversion of all rational ethic in the public life of late republican Rome, wherein men claimed to be free and self-governing, yet lived by oppressing the rest of the world, was on all hands fatal to the moral rectitude which inspires a critical philosophy.

Modern scholarship still clings to the long-established view that Cicero was practically right, and that Lucretius was practically wrong. Augustus, says Dr. Warde Fowler, was fortunate in finding in Virgil "one who was in some sense a

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*.  
<sup>2</sup> *De Divinatione*, ii, 33, 34, cp. ii, 12; and *De nat. Deorum*, i, 22. It is not surprising that in a later age, when the remaining pagans had no dialectic faculty left, the Christian Fathers, by using Cicero as a weapon against the cults, could provoke them into calling him impious (Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, iii, 6, 7).  
<sup>3</sup> *De Divinatione*, ii, 23.  
<sup>4</sup> *De nat. Deorum*, ii, 1.  
<sup>5</sup> Boissier, i, 58.  
<sup>6</sup> Boissier, p. 59.

prophet as well as a poet, who could urge the Roman by an imaginative example to return to a living *pietas*—not merely to the old religious forms, but to the intelligent sense of duty to God and man which had built up his character and his empire. In Cicero's day there was also a great poet, he too in some sense a prophet; but Lucretius could only appeal to the Roman to shake off the slough of his old religion, and such an appeal was at the time both futile and dangerous. Looking at the matter *historically, and not theologically*, we ought to sympathize with the attitude of Cicero and Scaevola towards the religion of the State. It was based on a statesmanlike instinct; and had it been possible for that instinct to express itself practically in a positive policy like that of Augustus, it is quite possible that much mischief might have been averted" (*Social Life at Rome*, pp. 325–26).

It is necessary to point out (1) that the early Roman's "sense of duty to God and man" was never of a kind that could fitly be termed "intelligent"; and (2) that it was his character that made his creed, and not his creed his character, though creed once formed reacts on conduct. Further, it may be permitted to suggest that we might consider historical problems morally, and to deprecate the academic view that "statesmanship" is something necessarily divorced from veracity. The imperfect appeal of Lucretius to the spirit of truth in an ignorant and piratical community, living an increasingly parasitic life, was certainly "futile"; but it is a strange sociology that sees in it something "dangerous," while regarding the life of perpetual conquest and plunder as a matter of course, and the practice of systematic deceit as wholesome.

The summary of the situation is that Cicero's policy of religious make-believe could no more have "saved" Rome than Plato's could have saved Athens, or than that of Augustus *did* save the empire. It went downhill about as steadily after as before him; and it continued to do so under Christianity as under paganism. The decline was absolutely involved in the policy of universal conquest; and neither creeds nor criticism of creeds could have "averted" the result while the cause subsisted. But there is something gratuitously anti-rational in the thesis that such a decay might have been prevented by a politic manipulation of beliefs *known* to be false, and that some regeneration was really worked in Rome by the tale of pious Æneas. In his *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911) Dr. Fowler is more circumspect.

In the upper-class Rome of Cicero's day his type seems to have been predominant,<sup>1</sup> the women alone being in the mass orthodox,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It seems to me that, on the whole, among the educated and the rich, the indifferent must have been in the majority" (Boissier, p. 61).  
<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 59.



and in their case the tendency was to add new superstitions to the old. Among public men there subsisted a clear understanding that public religion should continue for reasons of State. When we find an eminent politician like the elder M. Æmilius Scaurus prosecuted in the year 103 B.C. on a charge of neglecting certain religious ceremonies connected with his offices, we know that there had been neither conscientious abstention on his part nor sincere religious resentment on the other side, but merely a resort by political enemies, after Greek precedent, to a popular means of blackening an antagonist; for the same Scaurus, who was a member of the college of augurs, had actually rebuilt or restored the temple of Fides, said to have been founded by Numa, and that of Mens (Prudence), which had been set up after the great defeat of the Romans at the Trasimene lake;<sup>1</sup> the early and the late procedure alike illustrating the political and pragmatic character of the State religion.<sup>2</sup> In the supreme figure of JULIUS CÆSAR we see the Roman brain at its strongest; and neither his avowed unbelief in the already popular doctrine of immortality,<sup>3</sup> nor his repeatedly expressed contempt for the auspices,<sup>4</sup> withheld him from holding and fulfilling the function of high pontiff. The process of skepticism had been rapid among the men of action. The illiterate Marius carried about with him a Syrian prophetess; of Sulla, who unhesitatingly plundered the temple of Delphi, it was said that he carried a small figure of Apollo as an amulet;<sup>5</sup> of Cæsar, unless insofar as it may be true that in his last years, like Napoleon, he grew to believe in omens as his powers failed, under the stress of perpetual conflict,<sup>6</sup> it cannot be pretended that he was aught but a convinced freethinker.<sup>7</sup> The greatest and most intellectual man of action in the ancient world had no part in the faith which was supposed to have determined the success of the most powerful of all the ancient nations.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Long, *Decline of Roman Republic*, i, 438; ii, 38-40. Long remarks that Domitius, the accuser of Scaurus (who had prevented his election to the college of augurs), "used the name of religion for the purpose of damaging a political enemy; and the trick has been repeated, and is repeated, up to the present day. The Romans must have kept records of many of these trials. They were the great events of the times.....; and so we learn that three tribes voted against Scaurus, and thirty-two voted for him; but in each of these thirty-two tribes there was only a small majority of votes (*pauca puncta*) in favour of Scaurus."

<sup>2</sup> See Long, i, 56, for a cynical estimate of the mode of manipulation of the Sibylline and other sacred books.

<sup>3</sup> Sallust, *Bellum Catilin.* c. 51.  
<sup>4</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, cc. 59, 77; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii, 24. Cp. Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, c. 29; *Marius*, c. 16. Long (*Decline of Roman Republic*, ii, 369) says of Sulla that, "though he could rob a temple when he wanted money, he believed in the religion of his time. We should call him superstitious; and a man who is superstitious is capable of any crime, for he believes that the Gods can be conciliated by prayers and presents."

<sup>6</sup> Compare the fears which grew upon Cromwell in his last days.  
<sup>7</sup> Pompeius, on the other hand, had many seers in his camp; but after his overthrow expressed natural doubts about Providence. Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 24, 47; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, c. 75.

Dean Merivale, noting that Cæsar "professed without reserve the principles of the unbelievers," observes that, "freethinker as he was, he could not escape from the universal thralldom of superstition in which his contemporaries were held" (*Hist. of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424). The reproach, from a priest, is piquant, but misleading. All the stories on which it is founded apply to the last two or three years of Cæsar's life; and supposing them to be all true, which is very doubtful, they would but prove what has been suggested above—that the overstrained soldier, rising to the dizzy height of a tremendous career, partly lost his mental balance, like so many another. (Cp. Mackail, *Latin Literature*, 1895, p. 80.) Such is the bearing of the doubtful story (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxviii, 2) that after the breaking down of a chariot (presumably the casualty which took place in his fourfold triumph; see Dio Cassius, xlvi, 21) he never mounted another without muttering a charm. M. Boissier (i, 70) makes the statement of Pliny apply to Cæsar's whole life; but although Pliny gives no particulars, even Dean Merivale (p. 372) connects it with the accident in the triumph. To the same time belongs the less challengeable record (Dio Cassius, lx, 23) of his climbing on his knees up the steps of the Capitol to propitiate Nemesis. The very questionable legend, applied so often to other captains, of his saying, *I have thee, Africa*, when he stumbled on landing (Sueton. *Jul.* 59), is a proof not of superstition but of presence of mind in checking the superstitious fears of the troops, and was so understood by Suetonius; as was the rather flimsy story of his taking with him in Africa a man nicknamed *Salutio* (Sueton. *ibid.*) to neutralize the luck of the opposing Cornelii. The whole turn given to the details by the clerical historian is arbitrary and unjudicial. Nor is he accurate in saying that Cæsar "denied the Gods" in the Senate. He actually swore by them, *per Deos immortales*, in the next sentence to that in which he denied a future state. The assertion of the historian (p. 423), that in denying the immortality of the soul Cæsar denied "the recognized foundation of all religion," is a no less surprising error. The doctrine never had been so recognized in ancient Rome. A Christian ecclesiastic might have been expected to remember that the Jewish religion, believed by him to be divine, was devoid of the "recognized foundation" in question, and that the canonical book of Ecclesiastes expressly discards it. Of course Cæsar offered sacrifices to Gods in whom he did not believe. That was the habitual procedure of his age.

### § 3

It is significant that the decay of rationalism in Rome begins and proceeds with the Empire. Augustus, whose chosen name was



sacerdotal in its character,<sup>1</sup> made it part of his policy to restore as far as possible the ancient cults, many of which had fallen into extreme neglect, between the indifference of the aristocratic class<sup>2</sup> and the devotion of the populace, itself so largely alien, to the more attractive worships introduced from Egypt and the East. That he was himself a habitually superstitious man seems certain;<sup>3</sup> but even had he not been, his policy would have been natural from the Roman point of view. A historian of two centuries later puts in the mouth of Mæcenas an imagined counsel to the young emperor to venerate and enforce the national religion, to exclude and persecute foreign cults, to put down alike atheism and magic, to control divination officially, and to keep an eye on the philosophers.<sup>4</sup> What the empire sought above all things was stability; and a regimen of religion, under imperial control, seemed one of the likeliest ways to keep the people docile. Julius himself had seemed to plan such a policy,<sup>5</sup> though he also planned to establish public libraries,<sup>6</sup> which would hardly have promoted faith among the educated.

Augustus, however, aimed at encouraging public religion of every description, repairing or rebuilding eighty-two temples at Rome alone, giving them rich gifts, restoring old festivals and ceremonies, reinstituting priestly colleges, encouraging special foreign worships, and setting up new civic cults; himself playing high pontiff and joining each new priesthood, to the end of making his power and prestige so far identical with theirs;<sup>7</sup> in brief, anticipating the later ruling principle of the Church of Rome. The natural upshot of the whole process was the imperial apotheosis, or raising of each emperor to Godhead at death. The usage of deifying living rulers was long before common in Egypt and the east,<sup>8</sup> and had been adopted by the conquering Spartan Lysander in Asia Minor as readily as by the conquering Alexander. Julius Caesar seems to have put it aside as a nauseous flattery;<sup>9</sup> but Augustus wrought it

<sup>1</sup> Boissier, i, 73.

<sup>2</sup> See Augustine's citation from Varro, *De civ. Dei*, vi, 2. Cp. Sueton. *Aug.* 29.

<sup>3</sup> The only record to the contrary is the worthless scandal as to his "suppers of the Twelve Gods" (Sueton. *Aug.* 70). The statement of W. A. Schmidt that "none of the Julians was orthodox" (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, p. 175) is somewhat overstrained.

<sup>4</sup> Dio Cassius, lii, 36.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., his encouragement of a new college of priests founded in his honour. Dio, xlii, 6. <sup>6</sup> Sueton. *Julius*, 44, 56. The first public library actually opened in Rome was founded by Asinius Pollio under Augustus, and was placed in the forecourt of the temple of Liberty: Augustus founded two others; Tiberius a fourth, in his palace; Vespasian a fifth, in the temple of Peace; Domitian a sixth, on the Capitol. W. A. Schmidt, *Gesch. der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit*, pp. 151-52, and refs. <sup>7</sup> Boissier, pp. 67-108; Suetonius, *Aug.* xxix-xxxi.

<sup>8</sup> L'Abbé Beurlier, *Le Culte Impérial*, 1891, introd. and ch. 1; Boissier, ch. 2. Cp. p. 185, note, above.

<sup>9</sup> It would seem that the occasion on which he enraged the Senate by not rising to receive them (Sueton. *Jul.* 78) was that on which they came to announce that they had made him a God, Jupiter Julius, with a special temple and a special priest. See Long,

into his policy. It was the consummation at once of the old political conception of religion and of the new autocracy.

In a society so managed, all hope of return to self-government having ceased, the level of thought sank accordingly. There was practically no more active freethought. Livy, indeed, speaks so often of the contempt shown in his own day for tales of prodigies, and of what he calls contempt for the Gods,<sup>1</sup> that there can be no question of the lack of religion among the upper classes at the beginning of the empire. But even in Livy's day unbelief had ceased to go beyond a shrugging of the shoulders. HORACE, with his *credat Judæus Apella*, and his frank rejection of the fear of the *Deos tristes*,<sup>2</sup> was no believer, but he was not one to cross the emperor,<sup>3</sup> and he was ready to lend himself to the official policy of religion.<sup>4</sup> OVID could satirize<sup>5</sup> the dishonest merchant who prayed to the Gods to absolve his frauds; but he hailed Augustus as the sacred founder and restorer of temples,<sup>6</sup> prayed for him as such, busied himself with the archæology of the cults, and made it, not quite without irony, a maxim to "spare an accepted belief."<sup>7</sup> VIRGIL, at heart a pantheist with rationalistic leanings,<sup>8</sup> but sadly divided between Lucretius and Augustus, his poetical and his political masters,<sup>9</sup> tells all the transition from the would-be scientific to the newly-credulous age in the two wistful lines:—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.....

Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes<sup>10</sup>

—"happy he who has been able to learn the causes of things; fortunate also he who has known the rural Gods." The Gods, rural and other, entered on their due heritage in a world of decadence; Virgil's epic is a religious celebration of antiquity; and Livy's history is written in the credulous spirit, or at least in the tone, of an older time, with a few concessions to recent common sense.<sup>11</sup> In the next generation SENECA'S monotheistic aversion to the popular superstitions is the high-water mark of the period, and represents the elevating power of the higher Greek Stoicism. On this score he belongs to the freethinking age, while his theistic

*Decline of the Roman Republic*, v, 418. He might very well have intended to rebuke their baseness. But cp. Boissier, i, 122, citing Dio, xlii, 6.

<sup>1</sup> iii, 46; x, 40; xliii, 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Sat.* v, 98-103.

<sup>3</sup> As to the conflict between Horace's bias and his policy, cp. Boissier, i, 193-201.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., *Carm.* iii, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Fasti*, v, 673-92.

<sup>6</sup> *Fasti*, ii, 61-66.

<sup>7</sup> *Fasti*, iv, 204. The preceding phrase, *pro magno teste vetustas creditur*, certainly has an ironic ring.

<sup>8</sup> *Æneid*, vi, 724-27.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Boissier, i, 228-29.

<sup>10</sup> *Georgics*, ii, 490, 493. Diderot originated the idea that the first of these lines and the two which follow it in Virgil had reference to Lucretius. Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire*, ed. 1829-30, vi, 24-25. It is acquiesced in by W. Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, 1909, p. 327. Sellar (*Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil*, 1877, p. 201) is doubtful on the point.

<sup>11</sup> Cp. Boissier, i, 193.



apriorism belongs to the next.<sup>1</sup> All the while his principle of conformity to all legal observances<sup>2</sup> leaves him powerless to modify the environment.

As the empire proceeds, the echoes of the old freethought become fewer and fewer. It is an entire misconception to suppose that Christianity came into the Roman world as a saving counter-force to licentious unbelief. Unbelief had in large part disappeared before Christianity made any headway; and that creed came as one of many popular cults, succeeding in terms of its various adaptations to the special conditions, moral and economic. It was easy for the populace of the empire to deify a ruler: as easy as for those of the East to deify Jesus; or for the early Romans to deify Romulus; at Rome it was the people, now so largely of alien stock, who had most insisted on deifying Cæsar.<sup>3</sup> But the upper class soon kept pace with them in the zest for religion. In the first century, the elder PLINY recalls the spirit of Lucretius by the indignant eloquence with which he protests against the burdensome belief in immortality;<sup>4</sup> and the emphasis with which he scouts alike the polytheism of the multitude, the universal worship of Fortune, and the idea that man can know the infinite divinity which is the universe;<sup>5</sup> but, though Seneca and others reject the fear of future torment, Pliny is the last writer to repudiate with energy the idea of a future state.<sup>6</sup> A number of epitaphs still chime with his view; but already the majority are on the other side;<sup>7</sup> and the fear of hell was normally as active as the hope of heaven; while the belief in an approaching end of the world was proportionally as common as it was later under Christianity.<sup>8</sup> And though Pliny, discussing the bases of magic, of which he recognized the fraudulence, ranks among them the influences of religion, as to which he declared mankind to be still in extreme darkness,<sup>9</sup> we have seen how he in turn, on theistic grounds, frowned upon Hipparchos for daring to number the stars.<sup>10</sup> Thus, whatever may be the truth as to the persecutions of the Christians in the first two centuries of the empire, the motive was in all cases certainly political or moral, as in the earlier case of the Bacchic mysteries, not rationalistic hostility to its doctrines as apart from Christian attacks on the established worships.

<sup>1</sup> Boissier, ii, 84-92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* xcv.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius, *Jul.* 88.

<sup>4</sup> The same note occurs in Virgil, *Æneid.* vi, 719-21.

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. Nat.* ii, 1, 5 (7). Pliny identifies nature and deity: "*Per quæ declaratur haud dubie naturæ potentia, idque esse quod Deum vocamus*" (last cit., *end.*).

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. nat.* vii, 55 (56). Cp. Boissier, i, 300.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 301-303.

<sup>8</sup> See the praiseworthy treatise of Mr. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, 1891, chs. 5, 6, and 7.

<sup>9</sup> "*.....vires religionis, ad quas maxime etiamnum caligat humanum genus.*" *Hist. nat.* xxx, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Above, p. 188.

Some unbelievers there doubtless were after PETRONIUS, whose perdurable maxim that "Fear first made Gods in the world,"<sup>1</sup> adopted in the next generation by STATIUS,<sup>2</sup> was too pregnant with truth to miss all acceptance among thinking men. The fact that Statius in his verse ranked Domitian with the Gods made its truth none the less pointed. The Alexandrian rationalist CHAEREMON, who had been appointed one of the tutors of Nero, had explained the Egyptian religion as a mere allegorizing of the physical order of the universe.<sup>3</sup> It has been remarked too that in the next century the appointment of the freethinking Greek Lucian by Marcus Aurelius to a post of high authority in Egypt showed that his writings gave no great offence at court,<sup>4</sup> where, indeed, save under the two great Antonines, religious seriousness was rare. These, however, were the exceptions: the whole cast of mind developed under the autocracy, whether in the good or in the bad, made for belief and acquiescence or superstition rather than for searching doubt and sustained reasoning.

The statement of Mosheim or of his commentators (*Eccles. Hist.* 1 Cent. Pt. I, ch. i, § 21, *note*; Murdock's trans. Reid's ed.) that JUVENAL (*Sat.* xiii, 86) "complains of the many atheists at Rome" is a perversion of the passage cited. Juvenal's allusion to those who put all things down to fortune and deny a moral government of the world begins with the phrase "*sunt qui*," "there are (those) who"; he makes far more account of the many superstitious, and never suggests that the atheists are numerous in his day. Neither does he "complain"; on the contrary, his allusion to the atheists as such is non-condemnatory as compared with his attacks on pious rogues, and is thus part of the ground for holding that he was himself something of a freethinker—one of the last among the literary men. In the tenth Satire (346 *sqq.*) he puts the slightly theistic doctrine, sometimes highly praised (ed. Ruperti, 1817, *in loc.*), that men should not pray for anything, but leave the decision to the Gods, to whom man is dearer than to himself. There too occurs the famous doctrine (356) that if anything is to be prayed for it should be the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and the strong soul void of the fear of death. The accompanying phrase about offering "the intestines and the sacred sausages of a whitish pig" is flatly contemptuous of religious ceremonial; and the closing lines, placing the source

<sup>1</sup> *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.* Frag. 22, ed. Burmanni. The whole passage is noteworthy. See also his *Satyricon*, c. 137, as to his estimate of sacerdotal sincerity.

<sup>2</sup> *Thebaid.* iii, 661.

<sup>3</sup> Porphyry, *Epistle to Anebo* (with Jamblichus). Chaeremon, however, is said to have regarded comets as divine portents. Origen, *Ag. Celsus*, bk. i, ch. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. C. Martha, *Les moralistes sous l'empire romain*, ed. 1881, p. 341.



of virtue and happiness within, are strictly naturalistic. In the two last:—

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia; nos [or sed] te  
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, coeloque locamus,

the frequent reading *abest* for *habes* seems to make the better sense: "No divinity is wanting, if there be prudence; but it is we, O fortune, who make thee a Goddess, and throne thee in heaven." In any case, the insistence is on man's lordship of himself. (The phrase occurs again in *Sat.* xiv, 315.) But the worship of Fortune—which Pliny declares to be the prevailing faith of his day (*Hist. Nat.* II, v (vii), 7—was itself a cult like another, with temples and ritual; and the astrology which, he adds, is beginning to supersede Fortune-worship among the learned and the ignorant alike, was but a reversion to an older Eastern religion. His own preference is for sun-worship, if any; but he falls back on the conviction that the power of God is limited, and that God is thus seen to be simply Nature (*id.* 8).

The erroneous notion that the Roman aristocracy ran mainly to atheism was widely propagated by Voltaire, who made it part of his argument against the atheism of his own day (*Jenni*; art. *Athéisme*, in the *Dict. Philos.*, etc.). It will not bear examination. As regards the general tone of Roman literature from the first century onwards, the summing-up of Renan is substantially just: "The freethinkers.....diminish little by little, and disappear.....Juvenal alone continues in Roman society, down to the time of Hadrian, the expression of a frank incredulity.....Science dies out from day to day. From the death of Seneca, it may be said that there is no longer a thoroughly rationalistic scholar. Pliny the Elder is inquisitive, but uncritical. Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, avoid commenting on the inanity of the most ridiculous inventions. Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* vii, 27) believes in puerile stories of ghosts; Epictetus (*xxxi*, 5) would have all practise the established worship. Even a writer so frivolous as Apuleius feels himself bound to take the tone of a rigid conservative about the Gods (*Florida*, i, 1; *De Magia*, 41, 55, 56, 63). A single man, about the middle of this century, seems entirely exempt from supernatural beliefs; that is Lucian. The scientific spirit, which is the negation of the supernatural, exists only in a few; superstition invades all, enfeebling all reason" (*Les Évangiles*, ed. 1877, pp. 406–407).

That the mental paralysis connects causally with the political conditions will perhaps not now be denied. A censorship of the written word belongs congenitally to autocracy; and only the personal magnanimity of Cæsar and the prudence of Augustus delayed its development in Rome. Soon it became an irresistible terrorism. Even Cæsar, indeed, so far forgot one of the great rules

of his life as to impeach before the Senate the tribunes who had quite justifiably prosecuted some of the people who had hailed him as king;<sup>1</sup> and the fact that the Senate was already slavish enough to eject them gives the forecast of the future. Augustus long showed a notable forbearance to all manner of verbal opposition, and even disparagement; but at length he also began to prosecute for private aspersions,<sup>2</sup> and even to suppress histories of a too critical stamp. Tiberius began his reign with the high-pitched sentiment that "in a free State tongue and mind should be free";<sup>3</sup> and for a time he bore himself with an exemplary restraint; but he too, in turn, took the colour of his place, and became murderously resentful of any semblance of aspersion on himself.<sup>4</sup> The famous sentiment ascribed to him in the *Annals* of Tacitus, *Deorum injuriæ diis curæ*<sup>5</sup>—"the Gods' wrongs are the Gods' business"—is not noted by Suetonius, and has an un-Roman sound. What Suetonius tells is<sup>6</sup> that he was "very negligent concerning the Gods and religions," yet addicted to the astrologers, and a believer in fate. The fact remains that while, as aforesaid, there must have been still a number of unbelievers, there is no sign after Lucretius of any Roman propaganda against religion; and the presumption is that the Augustan policy of promoting the old cults was extended to the maintenance of the ordinary Roman view that disrespect to the Gods was a danger to the State. In the reign of Nero we find trace of a treatise *De religionis erroribus* by Fabricius Veiento,<sup>7</sup> wherein was ridiculed the zeal of the priests to proclaim mysteries which they did not understand; but, whether or not its author was exiled and the book burnt on their protest, such literature was not further produced.<sup>8</sup>

There was, in fact, no spirit left for a Lucretian polemic against false beliefs. Everything in the nature of a searching criticism of life was menaced by the autocracy; Nero decreeing that no man should philosophize at Rome,<sup>9</sup> after slaying or banishing a series of

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Schmidt, who cites this act (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit* pp. 31–33) as the beginning of the end of free speech in Rome, does not mention the detail given by Dio (xlv, 10), that Cæsar suspected the tribunes of having set on some of the people to hail him as king. But the unproved suspicion does not justify his course, which was a bad lapse of judgment, even if the suspicion were just. From this point a conspiracy against his life was natural. Cp. Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, v, 432–33, as to the facts.

<sup>2</sup> See W. A. Schmidt, pp. 34–108, for a careful analysis of the evolution. As to the book-censure, see pp. 101–104.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* c. 61.

<sup>5</sup> *Annals*, i, 73. That such a phrase should have been written by an emperor in an official letter, and yet pass unnoticed through antiquity save in one historical work, recovered only in the Renaissance, is one of the minor improbabilities that give colour to the denial of the genuineness of the *Annals*.

<sup>6</sup> *Tiberius*, c. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Petronius, *Satyricon*, ad init.

<sup>8</sup> In the *Annals* (xiv, 50) it is stated that the book attacked senators and pontiffs; that it was condemned to be burned, and Veiento to be exiled; and that the book was much sought and read while forbidden; but that it fell into oblivion when all were free to read it. Here, again, there is no other ancient testimony. Veiento is heard of, however, in Juvenal, iv, 113, 123–29.

<sup>9</sup> Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, iv, 47.



philosophers;<sup>1</sup> Domitian crucifying the very scribes who copied the work of Hermogenes of Tarsus, in which he was obliquely criticized.<sup>2</sup> When men in the mass crouched before such tyranny, helplessly beholding emperor after emperor overtaken by the madness that accrues to absolute power, they were disabled for any disinterested warfare on behalf of truth. All serious impeachment of religion proceeds upon an ethical motive; and in imperial Rome there was no room for any nobility of ethic save such as upbore the Stoics in their austere pursuit of self-control, in a world too full of evil to be delighted in.

Thus it came about that the Cæsars, who would doubtless have protected their co-operating priesthoods from any serious attack on the official religion,<sup>3</sup> had practically no occasion to do so. Lucian's jests were cast at the Gods of Greece, not at those of the Roman official cults; hence his immunity. What the Cæsars were concerned to do was rather to menace any alien religion that seemed to undermine the solidarity of the State; and of such religions, first the Jewish, and later the Christian, were obvious examples. Thus we have it that Tiberius "put down foreign religions" (*externas ceremonias*), in particular the Egyptian and Judaic rites; pulling down the temple of Isis, crucifying her priests, expelling from Rome all Jews and proselytes, and forcing the Jewish youth to undergo military service in unhealthy climates.<sup>4</sup> Even the astrologers, in whose lore he believed, he expelled until they promised to renounce their art—a precedent partly set up by Augustus,<sup>5</sup> and followed with varying severity by all the emperors, pagan and Christian alike.

And still the old Italian religion waned, as it must. On the one hand, the Italic population was almost wholly replaced or diluted by alien stocks, slave or free, with alien cults and customs; on the other, the utter insincerity of the official cults, punctiliously conserved by well-paid, unbelieving priests, invited indifference. In the nature of things, an unchanging creed is moribund; life means adaptation to change; and it was only the alien cults that in Rome adapted themselves to the psychic mutation. Among the educated, who had read their Lucretius, the spectacle of the innumerable cults of the empire conduced either to entire but tacit unbelief, or to a species of vaguely rationalistic<sup>6</sup> yet sentimental monotheism, in

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Schmidt, pp. 346-47.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Schmidt, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 36; Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii, 3, §§ 4, 5. Josephus specifies isolated pretexts, which Suetonius does not mention. They are not very probable.

<sup>4</sup> Who destroyed 2,000 copies of prophetic books. Suetonius, *Aug.* c. 31.

<sup>5</sup> See, in the next chapter, as to the rationalistic mythology of Macrobius.

<sup>6</sup> Suetonius, *Domitian*, c. 10.

which Reason sometimes figured as universal Deity.<sup>1</sup> Among the uneducated the progression was constant towards one or other of the emotional and ritualistic oriental faiths, so much better adapted to their down-trodden life.

#### § 4

One element of betterment there was in the life of declining Rome, until the Roman ideals were superseded by oriental. Even the Augustan poets, Horace and Ovid, had protested like the Hebrew prophets, and like Plato and like Cicero, against the idea that rich sacrifices availed with the Gods above a pure heart; and such doctrine, while paganism lasted, prevailed more and more.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Horace rejects the Judæo-Stoic doctrine, adopted in the gospels, that all sins are equal, and lays down the rational moral test of utility—*Utilitas justi propè mater et aequi*.<sup>3</sup> The better and more thoughtful men who grew up under the autocracy, though inevitably feebler and more credulous in their thinking than those of the later commonwealth, developed at length a concern for conduct, public and private, which lends dignity to the later philosophic literature, and lustre to the imperial rule of the Antonines. This concern it was that, linking Greek theory to Roman practice, produced a code of rational law which could serve Europe for a thousand years. This concern too it was, joined with the relatively high moral quality of their theism, that ennobled the writing of Seneca<sup>4</sup> and Epictetus and Maximus of Tyre; and irradiates the words as well as the rule of Marcus Aurelius. In them was anticipated all that was good<sup>5</sup> in the later Christian ethic, even as the popular faiths anticipated the Christian dogmas; and they cherished a temper of serenity that the Fathers fell far short of. To compare their pages with those of the subsequent Christian Fathers—Seneca with Lactantius, "the Christian Cicero"; Maximus with Arnobius; Epictetus with Tertullian; the admirable Marcus, and his ideal of the "dear city of Zeus," with the shrill polemic of Augustine's *City of God* and the hysteria of the *Confessions*—is to

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Propertius, ii, 14, 27 sqq.; iii, 23, 19-20; iv, 3, 38; Tibullus, iv, 1, 18-23; Juvenal, as before cited, and xv, 133, 142-46.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *2 Alcib.*; Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, c. 68; Horace, *Carm.* iii, 23, 17; Ovid, *Heroides*, *Acont. Cydipp.* 191-92; Persius, *Sat.* ii, 69; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, i, 6. Cp. Diod. Sic. xii, 20; Varro, in Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, vii, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *1 Sat.* iii, 96-98. Cp. Cicero, *De Finibus*, iv, 19, 27, 28; Matt. v, 19-23; James, ii, 10. Lactantius, again (*Div. Inst.* iii, 23), denounces the doctrine of the equality of offences as laid down by Zeno, giving no sign of knowing that it is also set forth in his own sacred books.

<sup>4</sup> On Seneca's moral teaching, cp. Martha, *Les Moralistes sous l'empire romain*, pp. 57-66; Boissier, *La religion romaine*, ii, 80-82. M. Boissier further examines fully the exploded theory that Seneca received Christian teaching. On this compare Bishop Lightfoot, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 237-92.

<sup>5</sup> Seneca was so advanced in his theoretic ethic as to consider all war on a level with homicide. *Epist.* xcv, 30.



prove a rapid descent in magnanimity, sanity, self-command, sweetness of spirit, and tolerance. What figures as religious intolerance in the Cæsars was, as we have seen, always a political, never a religious, animosity. Any prosecution of Christians under the Antonines was certainly on the score of breach of law, turbulence, or real or supposed malpractices, not on that of heresy—a crime created only by the Christians themselves, in their own conflicts.

The scientific account of the repellent characteristics of the Fathers, of course, is not that their faith made them what they were, but that the ever-worsening social and intellectual conditions assorted such types into their ecclesiastical places, and secured for them their influence over the types now prevailing among the people. They too stand for the intellectual dissolution wrought by imperialism. When all the higher forms of intellectual efficiency were at an end, it was impossible that on any religious impulse whatever there should be generated either a higher code of life or a saner body of thought than those of the higher paganism of the past. Their very arguments against paganism are largely drawn from old "pagan" sources. Those who still speak of the rise of Christianity in the ancient world as a process of "regeneration" are merely turning historical science out of doors. The Christian Fathers had all the opportunity that a life of quasi-intellectual specialism could supply; and their liberty of criticism as regarded the moribund pagan creeds was a further gymnastic; but nothing could countervail the insanity of their intellectual presuppositions, which they could not transcend.

Inheriting the Judaic hypnotism of the Sacred Book, they could reason only as do railers; and the moral readjustment which put them in revolt against the erotic element in pagan mythology was a mere substitution of an ascetic neurosis for the old disease of imagination. Strictly speaking, their asceticism, being never rationalized, never rose to the level of ethic as distinguished from mere taboo or sacrosanct custom. As we shall see, they could not wholly escape the insurgence of the spirit of reason; but they collectively scouted it with a success attained by no other ostensibly educated priesthood of antiquity. They intellectually represent, in fact, the consummation of the general Mediterranean decadence.

For the rest, the "triumph" of the new faith was simply the survival of the forms of thought, and, above all, of the form of religious community, best fitted to the political and intellectual environment. The new Church organization was above all things a great economic endowment for a class of preachers, polemicists, and

propagandists; and between the closing of the old spheres of public life and the opening of the new,<sup>1</sup> the new faith was established as much by political and economic conditions as by its intellectual adaptation to an age of mental twilight.

Of the religion of the educated pagans in its last forms, then, it is finally to be said that it was markedly rationalistic as compared with the Christianity which followed, and has been on that ground stigmatized by Christian orthodoxy down till our own day. The religion of Marcus Aurelius is self-reverence, self-study, self-rule, *plus* faith in Deity; and it is not to be gainsaid that, next to his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, he remains the noblest monarch in ancient history; the nearest parallel being the more superstitious but still noble Julian, the last of the great pagan rulers. In such rulers the antique philosophy was in a measure justified of its children; and if it never taught them to grapple with the vast sociological problem set up by the Empire, and so failed to preserve the antique civilization, it at least did as much for them in that regard as the new faith did for its followers.

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that preaching had begun among the moralists of Rome in the first century, and was carried on by the priests of Isis in the second; and that in Egypt monasticism had long been established. Martha, as cited, p. 67; Boissier, i, 356-59. Cp. Mosheim, 2 Cent. pt. ii, c. iii, §§ 13, 14, as to monasticism.



## CHAPTER VII

### ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY AND ITS OPPONENTS

#### § 1

THE Christian gospels, broadly considered, stand for a certain measure of freethinking reaction against the Jewish religion, and are accordingly to be reckoned with in the present inquiry; albeit their practical outcome was only an addition to the world's supernaturalism and traditional dogma. To estimate aright their share of freethought, we have but to consider the kind and degree of demand they made on the reason of the ancient listener, as apart, that is, from the demand made on their basis for the recognition of a new Deity. When this is done it will be found that they express in parts a process of reflection which outwent even critical common sense in a kind of ecstatic Stoicism, an oriental repudiation of the tyranny of passions and appetites; in other parts a mysticism that proceeds as far beyond the credulity of ordinary faith. Socially considered, they embody a similar opposition between an anarchistic and a partly orthodox or regulative ideal. The plain inference is that they stand for many independent movements of thought in the Græco-Roman world. It is actually on record that the reduction of the whole law to love of one's neighbour<sup>1</sup> was taught before the Christian era by the famous Rabbi Hillel;<sup>2</sup> and the gospel itself<sup>3</sup> shows that this view was current. In another passage<sup>4</sup> the reduction of the ten commandments to five again indicates a not uncommon disregard for the ecclesiastical side of the law. But the difference between the two passages points of itself to various forces of relative freethought.

Any attentive study of the gospels discloses not merely much glossing and piecing and interpolating of documents, but a plain medley of doctrines, of ideals, of principles; and to accept the mass of disconnected utterances ascribed to "the Lord," many of them associated with miracles, as the oral teaching of any one man, is a proceeding so uncritical that in no other study could it now be

<sup>1</sup> Mt. xxii, 39; Mk. xii, 31.  
<sup>2</sup> Mk. xii, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Talmud, tract. *Sabbath*, 306.  
<sup>4</sup> Lk. xviii, 20.

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followed. The simple fact that the Pauline Epistles (by whomsoever written) show no knowledge of any Jesuine miracles or teachings whatever, except as regards the Last Supper (1 Cor. xi, 24-25—a passage obviously interpolated), admits of only three possible interpretations: (1) the Jesus then believed in had not figured as a teacher at all; or (2) the writer or writers gave no credit or attached no importance to reports of his teachings. Either of these views (of which the first is plainly the more plausible) admits of (3) the further conclusion that the Pauline Jesus was not the Gospel Jesus, but an earlier one—a fair enough hypothesis; but on that view the mass of Dominical utterances in the gospels is only so much the less certificated. When, then, it is admitted by all open-minded students that the *events* in the narrative are in many cases fictitious, even when they are not miraculous, it is wholly inadmissible that the *sayings* should be trustworthy, as one man's teachings.

Analysing them in collation, we find even in the Synoptics, and without taking into account the Fourth Gospel, such wide discrepancies as the following:—

1. The doctrine: "the Kingdom of God is among you" (Lk. xvii, 21), side by side with promises of the speedy arrival of the Son of Man, whose coming = the Kingdom of God (cp. Mt. iii, 2, 3; iv, 17; Mk. i, 15).
2. The frequent profession to supersede the Law (Mt. v, 21, 33, 38, 43, etc.); and the express declaration that not one jot or tittle thereof is to be superseded (Mt. v, 17-20).
3. Proclamation of a gospel for the poor and the enslaved (Lk. iv, 18); with the tacit acceptance of slavery (Lk. xvii, 7, 9, 10; where the word translated "servant" in the A.V., and let pass by McClellan, Blackader, and other reforming English critics, certainly means "slave").
4. Stipulation for the simple fulfilment of the Law as a passport to eternal life, with or without further self-denial (Mt. xix, 16-21; Lk. x, 28; xviii, 22); on the other hand a stipulation for simple benevolence, as in the Egyptian ritual (Mt. xxv; cp. Lk. ix, 48); and yet again stipulations for blind faith (Mt. x, 15) and for blood redemption (Mt. xxvi, 28).
5. Alternate promise (Mt. vi, 33; xix, 29) and denial (Mt. x, 34-39) of temporal blessings.
6. Alternate commands to secrecy (Mt. xii, 16; viii, 4; ix, 30; Mk. iii, 12; v, 43; vii, 36) and to publicity (Mt. vii, 7-8; Mk. v, 19) concerning miracles, with a frequent record of their public performance.
7. Specific restriction of salvation to Israelites (Mt. x, 5, 6; xv, 24; xix, 28); equally specific declaration that the Kingdom of God shall be to another nation (Mt. xxii, 43); no less specific



assurance that the Son of Man (not the Twelve as in Mt. xix, 28) shall judge all nations, not merely Israel (Mt. xxv, 32; cp. viii, 11).

8. Profession to teach all, especially the simple and the childlike (Mt. xviii, 3; xi, 25, 28-30; Mk. x, 15); on the contrary, a flat declaration (Mt. xiii, 10-16; Mk. iv, 11; Lk. viii, 10; cp. Mk. iv, 34) that the saving teaching is only for the special disciples; yet again (Mt. xv, 16; Mk. vi, 52; viii, 17, 18) imputations of lack of understanding to them.

9. Companionship of the Teacher with "publicans and sinners" (Mt. ix, 10); and, on the other hand, a reference to the publicans as falling far short of the needed measure of loving-kindness (Mt. v, 46).

10. Explicit contrarieties of phrase, not in context (Mt. xii, 30; Lk. xi, 50).

11. Flat contradictions of narrative as to the Teacher's local success (Mt. xiii, 54-58; Lk. iv, 23).

12. Insistence that the Messiah is of the Davidic line (Mt. i, xxi, 15; Lk. i, 27; ii, 4), and that he is not (Mt. xxii, 43-45; Mk. xii, 35-37; Lk. xx).

13. Contradictory precepts as to limitation and non-limitation of forgiveness (Mt. xviii, 17, 22).

Such variously serious discrepancies count for more than even the chronological and other divergences of the records concerning the Birth, the Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, as proofs of diversity of source; and they may be multiplied indefinitely. The only course for criticism is to admit that they stand for the ideas of a variety of sects or movements, or else for an unlimited manipulation of the documents by individual hands. Many of them may very well have come from various so-called "Lords" and "Messiahs"; but they cannot be from a single teacher.

There remains open the fascinating problem as to whether some if not all of the more notable teachings may not be the utterances of one teacher of commanding originality, whose sectaries were either unable to appreciate or unable to keep separate his doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly some of the better teachings came first from men of superior capacity and relatively deep ethical experience. The veto on revenge, and the inculcation of love to enemies, could not come from commonplace minds; and the saying preserved from the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, "Unless ye cease from sacrificing the wrath shall not cease from you," has a remarkable ring.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> See the impressive argument of Dr. Moncreux Conway in his *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, ch. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Nicholson's *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, 1879, p. 77. Cp. Conway, p. 222. Dr. Nicholson insists that at least the word "sacrificing" must be spurious, because "it is surely impossible that Jesus ever uttered this threat!"

when we compare the precept of forgiveness with similar teachings in the Hebrew books and the Talmud,<sup>1</sup> we realize that the capacity for such thought had been shown by a number of Jewish teachers, and that it was a specific result of the long sequence of wrong and oppression undergone by the Jewish people at the hands of their conquerors. The unbearable, consuming pain of an impotent hate, and the spectacle of it in others—this experience among thoughtful men, and not an unconditioned genius for ethic in one, is the source of a teaching which, categorically put as it is in the gospels, misses its meaning with most who profess to admire it; the proof being the entire failure of most Christians in all ages to act on it. To say nothing of similar teaching in Old Testament books and in the Talmud, we have it in the most emphatic form in the pre-Christian "Slavonic Enoch."<sup>2</sup>

A superior ethic, then, stands not for one man's supernormal insight, but for the acquired wisdom of a number of wise men. And it is now utterly impossible to name the individual framers of the gospel teachings, good or bad. The central biography dissolves at every point before critical tests; it is a mythical construction.<sup>3</sup> Of the ideas in the Sermon on the Mount, many are ancient; of the parabolic and other teachings, some of the most striking occur only in the third gospel, and are unquestionably late. And when we are asked to recognize a unique personality behind any one doctrine, such as the condemnation of sacrifice in the uncanonical Hebrew Gospel, we can but answer (1) that on the face of the case this doctrine appears to come from a separate circle; (2) that the renunciation of sacrifice was made by many Greek and Roman writers,<sup>4</sup> and by earlier teachers among the Hebrews;<sup>5</sup> and (3) that in the Talmud, and in such a pre-Christian document as the "Slavonic Enoch," there are teachings which, had they occurred in the gospels, would have been confidently cited as unparalleled in ancient literature. The Talmudic teachings, so vitally necessary in Jewry, that "it is better to be persecuted than persecutor," and that, "were the persecutor a just man and the persecuted an impious, God would still be on the side of the persecuted,"<sup>6</sup> are not equalled for practical purposes by any in the Christian sacred books; and the Enochic beatitude, "Blessed is he who looks to raise his own hand for labour,"<sup>7</sup> is no less remarkable. But it is impossible to associate

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the author's *Christianity and Mythology*, pt. iii, div. ii, § 6.

<sup>2</sup> *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, known as the "Slavonic Enoch," ch. xlv. 1 (Eng. tr. 1896, pp. 60, 67).

<sup>3</sup> See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pt. ii.

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 215.

<sup>5</sup> Hosea, vi, 6; Psalm, xl, 6, 7; Ecclesiastes, v, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Talmud. *Yoma-Derech Eretz*; Midrash, *Vayikra-Rabba*, xxvii, 11 and 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ch. lii (p. 69).



these teachings with any outstanding personality, or any specific movements; and to posit a movement-making personality in the sole case of certain scattered sayings in the gospels is critically inadmissible.

There is positively no ground for supposing that any selected set of teachings constituted the basis or the original propaganda of any single Christian sect, primary or secondary; and the whole known history of the cult tells against the hypothesis that it ever centred round those teachings which to-day specially appeal to the ethical rationalist. Such teachings are more likely to be adventitious than fundamental, in a cult of sacrificial salvation. When an essentially rationalistic note is struck in the gospels, as in the insistence<sup>1</sup> that a notable public catastrophe is not to be regarded in the old Jewish manner as a punishment for sin, it is cancelled in the next sentence by an interpolation which unintelligently reaffirms the very doctrine denied.<sup>2</sup> So with the teaching<sup>3</sup> that the coming worship is to be neither Judaic nor Samaritan: the next sentence reaffirms Jewish particularism in the crudest way. The main movement, then, was clearly superstitious.

It remains to note the so-far rationalistic character of such teachings as the protests against ceremonialism and sabbatarianism, the favouring of the poor and the outcast, the extension of the future life to non-Israelites, and the express limitation of prayer (Mt. vi, 9; Lk. xi, 2) to a simple expression of religious feeling—a prescription which has been absolutely ignored through the whole history of the Church, despite the constant use of the one prayer prescribed—itsself a compilation of current Jewish phrases.

The expression in the Dominical prayer translated "Give us this day [or day by day] our daily bread" (Mt. vi, 11; Lk. xi, 3) is pointless and tautological as it stands in the English and other Protestant versions. In verse 8 is the assurance that the Father knows beforehand what is needed; the prayer is, therefore, to be a simple process of communion or advocacy, free of all verbiage; then, to make it specially ask for the necessary subsistence, without which life would cease, and further to make the demand each day, when in the majority of cases there would be no need to offer such a request, is to stultify the whole. If the most obvious necessity is to be urged, why not all the less obvious? The Vulgate translation, "Give us to-day our super-substantial bread," though it has the air of providing for the Mass, is presumptively the original sense; and is virtually supported by

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiii, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Conway, *Solomon and Solomon's Literature*, 1899, pp. 57, 201, 219.    <sup>3</sup> John iv, 21.

McClellan (*N. T.* 1875, ii, 645-47), who notes that the repeated use of the article, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον, implies a special meaning, and remarks that of all the suggested translations "daily" is "the very one which is mostly manifestly and utterly condemned." Compare the bearing of the verses Mt. vi, 25-26, 31-34, which expressly exclude the idea of prayer for bread, and Lk. xi, 13. The idea of a super-substantial bread seems already established in Philo, *De Legum Allegor.* iii, 55-57, 59-61. Naturally the average theologian (e.g., Bishop Lightfoot, cited by McClellan) clings to the conception of a daily appeal to the God for physical sustenance; but in so doing he is utterly obscuring the original doctrine.

Properly interpreted, the prayer forms a curious parallel to the close of the tenth satire of Juvenal, above cited, where all praying for concrete boons is condemned, on the ground that the Gods know best, and that man is dearer to them than to himself; but where there is permitted (of course, illogically) an appeal for soundness of mind and spiritual serenity. The documents would be nearly contemporary, and, though independent, would represent kindred processes of ethical and rational improvement on current religious practice. On the other hand, the prayer, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—which again rings alien to the context—would have been scouted by Juvenal as representing a bad survival of the religion of fear. Several early citations and early MSS., it should be noted, give a briefer version of the prayer, beginning, "Father, hallowed be thy name," and dropping the "Thy will be done" clause, as well as the "deliver us from evil," though including the "lead us not into temptation."

It may or may not have been that this rationalization of religion was originally preached by the same sect or school as gave the exalted counsel to resist not evil and to love enemies—a line of thought found alike in India and in China, and, in the moderate form of a veto on retaliation, in Greece and Rome.<sup>1</sup> But it is inconceivable that the same sect originally laid down the doctrines of the blood sacrifice and the final damnation of those who did not accept the Messiah (Mt. x). The latter dogmas, with the myths, naturally became the practical creed of the later Church, for which the counsel of non-sollicitous prayer and the love of enemies were unimaginable ideals.<sup>2</sup> Equally incapable of realization by a State

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Plato, *Crito*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. ii, 150; Seneca, *De Ira*, ii, 32. Valerius Maximus (iv, 2, 4) even urges the returning of benefits for injuries.

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to find in the whole patristic literature a single display of the "love" in question. In all early Christian history there is nothing to represent it save the attitude of martyrs towards their executioners—an attitude seen often in pagan literature. (E.g., *Ælian*, *Var. Hist.* xii, 49.)



Church was the anti-Pharisaical and "Bohemian" attitude ascribed to the founder, and the spirit of independence towards the reigning powers. For the rest, the occult doctrine that a little faith might suffice to move mountains—a development from the mysticisms of the Hebrew prophets—could count for nothing save as an incitement to prayer in general. The freethinking elements in the gospels, in short, were precisely those which historic Christianity inevitably cast aside.

## § 2

Already in the Epistles the incompatibility of the original critical spirit with sectarian policy has become clear. Paul—if the first epistle to the Thessalonians be his—exhorts his converts to "prove all things, hold fast what is good";<sup>1</sup> and by way of making out the Christist case against unpliant Jews he argues copiously in his own way; but as soon as there is a question of "another Jesus"<sup>2</sup> being set up, he is the sectarian fanatic pure and simple, and he no more thinks of applying the counsel of criticism to his dogma<sup>3</sup> than of acting on his prescription of love in controversy. "Reasonings" (*λογισμοὺς*) are specially stigmatized: they must be "cast down."<sup>4</sup> The attitude towards slavery now becomes a positive fiat in its support;<sup>5</sup> and all political freethinking is superseded by a counsel of conformity.<sup>6</sup> The slight touch of rationalism in the Judaic epistle of James, where the principle of works is opposed to that of faith, is itself quashed by an anti-rational conception of works.<sup>7</sup> From a sect so taught, freethinking would tend to disappear. It certainly obtruded itself early, for we have the Pauline complaint<sup>8</sup> that "some among you say there is no rising from the dead"; but men of that way of thinking had no clear ground for belonging to the community, and would soon be preached out of it, leaving only so much of the spirit of criticism as produced heresies within the sphere of supernaturalism.

## § 3

When the new creed, spreading through the Empire, comes actively in contact with paganism, the rationalistic principle of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v, 21.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xi, 4; Gal. i, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Rom. ix, 14-21.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. x, 5. Needless to say, such an expression savours strongly of late invention; but in any case it tells of the attitude of the Christian teachers of the second century.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. vii, 20-24 (where the phrase translated in English "use it rather" unquestionably means "rather continue" = remain a slave. Cp. Eph. vi, 5, and Variorum Teacher's Bible in loc.).

<sup>6</sup> Rom. xiii, 1. Cp. 1 Peter ii, 13-14; Tit. iii, 1. The anti-Roman spirit in the Apocalypse is Judaic, not Gentile-Christian; the book being of Jewish origin.

<sup>7</sup> James ii, 21.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. xv, 12.

anti-idolatry, still preserved by the Jewish impulse, comes into prominence; and insofar as they criticized pagan myths and pagan image-worship, the early Christians may be said to have rationalized.<sup>1</sup> Polytheists applied the term "atheistical" alike to them<sup>2</sup> and the Jews.<sup>3</sup> As soon as the cult was joined by lettered men, the primitive rationalism of Evêmeros was turned by them to account; and a series of Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Augustine, pressed the case against the pagan creeds with an unflagging malice which, if exhibited by later rationalists towards their own creed, Christians would characterize in strong terms. But the practice of criticism towards other creeds was, with the religious as with the philosophical sects, no help to self-criticism. The attitude of the Christian mass towards pagan idols and the worship of the Emperor was rather one of frenzy<sup>4</sup> than of intellectual superiority;<sup>5</sup> and the Fathers never seem to have found a rationalistic discipline in their polemic against pagan beliefs. Where the unbelieving Lucian brightly banters, they taunt and asperse, in the temper of barbarians deriding the Gods of the enemy. None of them seems to realize the bearing against his own creed of the pagan argument that to die and to suffer is to give proof of non-deity.<sup>6</sup> In the end, the very image-worship which had been the main ground of their rational attack on paganism became the universal usage of their own Church; and its worship of saints and angels, of Father, Son, and Virgin Mother, made it more truly a polytheism than the creed of the later pagans had been.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore rather to the heresies within the Church than to its attacks on the old polytheism that we are to look for early Christian survivals of ancient rationalism; and for the most part, after the practically rationalistic refusal of the early Ebionites to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth,<sup>8</sup> these heresies were but combinations of other theosophies with the Christian.

Already in the spurious Epistles to Timothy we have allusion to the "antitheses of the *gnosis*"<sup>9</sup> or pretended occult knowledge; and

<sup>1</sup> The Apology of Athenagoras (2nd c.) is rather a defence of monotheism than a Christian document; hence, no doubt, its speedy neglect by the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* c. 5; Min. Felix, *Octavius*, c. 10.

<sup>3</sup> "The inhabitants of Coesyleia, Idumea, and Judea are principally influenced by Aries and Ares, and are generally audacious, atheistical, and treacherous" (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ii, 3—Paraphrase of Proclus).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Tertullian, *De Idolatria*, *passim*, and *Ad Scapulam*, c. 5.

<sup>5</sup> For the refusal to worship men as Gods they had, of course, abundant pagan precedent. See above, p. 186, note.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Tertullian, *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 1; Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, i, 41, etc.; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, c. xv; *Epit.* c. vii.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. vii.

<sup>8</sup> Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 26. Cp. Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl. § 23, 4 (p. 37), as to Cerinthus.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Tim. vi, 20. The word persistently translated "oppositions" is a specific term in Gnostic lore. Cp. R. W. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, 1854, p. 115, note.



to early Gnostic influences may be attributed those passages in the gospel, above cited, which affirm that the Messiah's teaching is not for the multitude but for the adepts.<sup>1</sup> All along, Gnosticism<sup>2</sup> stood for the influence of older systems on the new faith; an influence which among Gentiles, untrained to the cult of sacred books, must have seemed absolutely natural. In the third century Ammonios Saccas, of Alexandria, said to have been born of Christian parents, set up a school which sought to blend the Christian and the pagan systems of religion and philosophy into a pantheistic whole, in which the old Gods figured as subordinate dæmons or as allegorical figures, and Christ as a reformer.<sup>3</sup> The special leaning of the school to Plato, whose system, already in vogue among the scholars of Alexandria, had more affinity than any of its rivals<sup>4</sup> to Christianity, secured for it adherents of many religious shades,<sup>5</sup> and enabled it to develop an influence which permanently affected Christian theology; this being the channel through which the doctrine of the Trinity entered. According to Mosheim, almost no other philosophy was taught at Alexandria down to the sixth century.<sup>6</sup> Only when the regulative zeal of the Church had begun to draw the lines of creed definitely<sup>7</sup> on anti-philosophic lines did the syncretic school, as represented by Plotinus, Porphyry, and Hierocles,<sup>8</sup> declare itself against Christianity.

Among the Church sects, as distinguished from the philosophic, the syncretic tendency was hardly less the vogue. Some of the leading Fathers of the second century, in particular Clement of Alexandria and Origen, show the Platonic influence strongly,<sup>9</sup> and are given, the latter in particular, to a remarkably free treatment of the sacred books, seeing allegory wherever credence had been made difficult by previous science,<sup>10</sup> or inconvenient by accepted dogma. But in the multiplicity of Gnostic sects is to be seen the main proof

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, Mitchell's trans. p. 77 (ch. vi), p. 149 (bk. ii, ch. vi); Gieseler, *Comp. of Eccles. Hist.* i, § 63, Eng. tr. i, 234, as to the attitude of Origen.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Gnostic," often treated as if applicable only to heretical sects, was adopted by Clemens of Alexandria as an honourable title. Cp. Gieseler, p. 241, as cited.

<sup>3</sup> Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 4-12. Cp., however, Abbé Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 1859, pp. 421-23, and Ueberweg, i, 239, as to the obscurity resting on the original teaching of Ammonios.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Gieseler, *Compendium*, i, § 52 (tr. vol. i, p. 162).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* §§ 54, 55, pp. 186-90.

<sup>6</sup> *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 2-4.

<sup>7</sup> As to the earlier latitudinarianism, cp. Gieseler, as cited, p. 166.

<sup>8</sup> Gieseler, § 55.

<sup>9</sup> Mosheim, *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 1-7; Gieseler, as cited, § 53, pp. 162-65; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* vi, 19; B. Saint-Hilaire, *De l'école d'Alexandrie*, 1845, p. 7; Baur, *Ch. Hist.* Eng. tr. ii, 3-8. But cp. Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, i, v, ch. v.

<sup>10</sup> Cp. Mosheim on Origen, *Comm. de rebus Christ. ante Const.* §§ 27, 28, summarized in Schlegel's note to *Ec. Hist.* Reid's ed. pp. 100-101; Gieseler, § 63; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 114, 140. Dr. Hatch (*Influence of Greek Ideas on the Christian Church*, pp. 82-83) notes that the allegorical method, which began in a tendency towards rationalism, came later to be typically orthodox.

of the effort of Christians, before the complete collapse of the ancient civilization, to think with some freedom on their religious problems.<sup>1</sup> In the terms of the case—apart from the Judaizing of the Elcesaites and Clemens Romanus—the thought is an adaptation of pagan speculation, chiefly oriental and Egyptian; and the commonest characteristics are: (1) in theology, an explanation of the moral confusion of the world by assuming two opposed Powers,<sup>2</sup> or by setting a variety of good and bad subordinate powers between the world and the Supreme Being; and (2) in ethics, an insistence either on the inherent corruptness of matter or on the incompatibility of holiness with physical pleasure.<sup>3</sup> The sects influenced chiefly from Asia teach, as a rule, a doctrine of two great opposing Powers; those influenced from Egypt seek rather the solution of gradation of power under one chief God. All alike showed some hostility to the pretensions of the Jews. Thus:—

1. Saturninus of Antioch (second century) taught of a Good and an Evil Power, and that the world and man were made by the seven planetary spirits, without the knowledge or consent of either Power; both of whom, however, sought to take control, the Good God giving men rational souls, and subjecting them to seven Creators, one of whom was the God of the Jews. Christ was a spirit sent to bring men back to the Good God; but only their asceticism could avail to consummate the scheme. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 24; Epiphanius, *Hæreses*, xxiii.)

2. Similarly, Marcion (son of a bishop of Pontus) placed between the good and bad Powers the Creator of the lower world, who was the God and Lawgiver of the Jews, a mixed nature, but just: the other nations being subjects of the Evil Power. Jesus, a divine spirit sent by the Supreme God to save men, was opposed by both the God of the Jews and the Evil Power; and asceticism is the way to carry out his saving purpose. Of the same cast were the sects of Bardesanes and Tatian. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 27, 28; Epiphanius,

<sup>1</sup> "Gnosis was an attempt to convert Christianity into philosophy; to place it in its widest relation to the universe, and to incorporate with it the ideas and feelings approved by the best intelligence of the times." Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 109. But cp. the *per contra* on p. 110: "It was but a philosophy in fetters, an effort of the mind to form for itself a more systematic belief in its own prejudices." Again (p. 115): "a reaction towards freethought was the essence of Gnosis." So also Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 4-5, 153.

<sup>2</sup> This view could be supported by the Platonists from Plato, *Laws*, bk. x. Cp. Chaignet, *La vie et les écrits de Platon*, 1871, p. 422; and Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. v, ed. Paris, 1840, i, 288. It is explicitly set forth by Plutarch, *I. and O.* cc. 45-49.

<sup>3</sup> On the subject in general cp. Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v; also his *Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before Constantine*, Eng. tr. vol. ii; Harnack, *Outlines of the Hist. of Dogma*, ch. iv; King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. iii, §§ 10, 11, 12; Renan, *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, chs. ix, x; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. v; Lardner, *Hist. of Heretics*, in *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii; Baur, *Church History*, pt. iii; Jeremie, *Hist. of the Chr. Church in 2nd and 3rd Cent.* ch. v (in *Encyc. Metropolitana*).



*Hereses*, c. 56; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* iv, 30. Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 7-9. As to Marcion, see Harnack, *Outlines*, ch. v; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. iii, §§ 7, 12, 13; Irenæus, iv, 29, 30; Tertullian, *Against Marcion*.)

3. The Manichean creed (attributed to the Persian Mani or Manichæus, third century) proceeded on the same dualistic lines. In this the human race had been created by the Power of Evil or Darkness, who is the God of the Jews, and hence the body and its appetites are primordially evil, the good element being the rational soul, which is part of the Power of Light. By way of combining Christism and Mithraism, Christ is virtually identified with Mithra, and Manichæus claims to be the promised Paraclete. Ultimately the Evil Power is to be overcome, and kept in eternal darkness, with the few lost human souls. Here again the ethic is extremely ascetic, and there is a doctrine of purgatory. (Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. i; Mosheim, *E. H.* 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 2-11; Beausobre, *Hist. Critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, 1734; Lardner, *Cred. of the Gospels*, pt. ii, ch. lxiii.)

4. Among the Egyptian Gnostics, again, Basilides taught that the one Supreme God produced seven perfect secondary Powers, called Æons (Ages), two of whom, Dynamis and Sophia (Power and Wisdom), procreated superior angels, who built a heaven, and in turn produced lower grades of angels, which produced others, till there were 365 grades, all ruled by a Prince named Abraxas (whose name yields the number 365). The lowest grades of angels, being close to eternal matter (which was evil by nature), made thereof the world and men. The Supreme God then intervened, like the Good Power in the oriental system, to give men rational souls, but left them to be ruled by the lower angels, of whom the Prince became God of the Jews. All deteriorated, the God of the Jews becoming the worst. Then the Supreme God sent the Prince of the Æons, Christ, to save men's souls. Taking the form of the man Jesus, he was slain by the God of the Jews. Despite charges to the contrary, this system too was ascetic, though lenient to paganism. Similar tenets were held by the sects of Carpocrates and Valentinus, all rising in the second century; Valentinus setting up Thirty Æons, male and female, in pairs, with four unmarried males, guardians of the Pleroma or Heaven—namely, Horus, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus. The youngest Æon, Sophia, brought forth a daughter, Achamoth (*Scientia*), who made the world out of rude matter, and produced Demiourgos, the Artificer, who further manipulated matter. (Irenæus, bk. i, chs. 24, 25; bk. ii.)

These sects in turn split into others, with endless peculiarities.

Such was the relative freethought of credulous theosophic fantasy,<sup>1</sup> turning fictitious data to fresh purpose by way of solving the riddle of the painful earth. The problem was to account for evil consistently with a Good God; and the orientals, inheriting a dualistic religion, adapted that; while the Egyptians, inheriting a syncretic monotheism, set up grades of Powers between the All-Ruler and men, on the model of the grades between the Autocrat, ancient or modern, and his subjects. The Manichæans, the most thoroughly organized of all the outside sects, appear to have absorbed many of the adherents of the great Mithraic religion, and held together for centuries, despite fierce persecution and hostile propaganda, their influence subsisting till the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> The other Gnosticisms fared much worse. Lacking sacred books, often setting up a severe ethic as against the frequently loose practice of the churches,<sup>3</sup> and offering a creed unsuited to the general populace, all alike passed away before the competition of the organized Church, which founded on the Canon<sup>4</sup> and the concrete dogmas, with many pagan rites and beliefs<sup>5</sup> and a few great pagan abracadabras added.

## § 4

More persistently dangerous to the ancient Church were the successive efforts of the struggling spirit of reason within to rectify in some small measure its most arbitrary dogmas. Of these efforts the most prominent were the quasi-Unitarian doctrine of ARIUS (fourth century), and the opposition by PELAGIUS and his pupil CÆLESTIUS (early in fifth century) to the doctrine of hereditary sin and predestinate salvation or damnation—a Judaic conception dating in the Church from Tertullian, and unknown to the Greeks.<sup>6</sup>

The former was the central and one of the most intelligible conflicts in the vast medley of early discussion over the nature of

<sup>1</sup> "Mysticism itself is but an insane rationalism" (Hampden, Bampton Lect. on *Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. intr. p. liii). It may be described as freethought without regard to evidence—that "lawless thought" which Christian polemicists are wont to ascribe to rationalists.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, §§ 61, 86 (pp. 228, 368, 370).

<sup>3</sup> In the fourth century and later, however, the gospel of asceticism won great orthodox vogue through the writings of the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, c. iii, § 13; Westcott, *Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 190-91.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the process by which the Talmudic system unified Judaism. Wellhausen, *Israel*, as cited, pp. 541-42; Milman, *History of Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. 4, ed. Paris, 1840, i, 276.

<sup>5</sup> "There is good reason to suppose that the Christian bishops multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and the pagans more friendly to them" (Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iv. Cp. ch. iii, § 17; ch. iv, §§ 3-7; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 1-3; ch. iv, §§ 1-2; 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 2). This generalization is borne out by nearly every other Church historian. Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. i, ch. i; Milman, bk. iv, ch. 5, pp. 367-74; Gieseler, §§ 98, 99, 101, 104; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e edit. p. 630. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. tr. ii, 285-89.

<sup>6</sup> Gieseler, § 87, p. 373; Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl. § 108.



the Person of the Founder—a theme susceptible of any conceivable formula, when once the principle of deification was adopted. Between the Gnosticism of Athenagoras, which made the Logos the direct manifestation of Deity, and the Judaic view that Jesus was "a mere man," for stating which the Byzantine currier Theodotos was excommunicated at Rome by Bishop Victor<sup>1</sup> in the third century, there were a hundred possible fantasies of discrimination;<sup>2</sup> and the record of them is a standing revelation of the intellectual delirium in the ancient Church. Theodotos the currier is said to have made disciples<sup>3</sup> who induced one Natalius to become "a bishop of this heresy"; and his doctrine was repeatedly revived, notably by Artemon. According to a trinitarian opponent, they were much given to science, in particular to geometry and medicine.<sup>4</sup> But such an approach to rationalism could not prosper in the atmosphere in which Christianity arose. Arianism itself, when put on its defence, pronounced Jesus to be God, after beginning by declaring him to be merely the noblest of created beings, and thus became merely a modified mysticism, fighting for the conception *homoiousios* (of similar nature) as against that of *homoousios* (of the same nature).<sup>5</sup> Even at that, the sect split up, its chief dissenters ranking as semi-Arians, and many of the latter at length drifting back to Nicene orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup> At first strong in the east, where it persecuted when it could, it was finally suppressed, after endless strifes, by Theodosius at the end of the fourth century; only to reappear in the west as the creed of the invading Goths and Lombards. In the east it had stood for ancient monotheism; in the west it prospered by early missionary and military chance till the Papal organization triumphed.<sup>7</sup> Its suppression meant the final repudiation of rationalism; though it had for the most part subsisted as a fanaticism, no less than did the Nicene creed.

More philosophical, and therefore less widespread, was the doctrine associated in the second century with the name of Praxeas, in the third with those of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, and in

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, v, 28; Gieseler, § 60, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Gieseler, §§ 80-83, pp. 328-53; Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. i, esp. pp. 201-202.

<sup>3</sup> One being another Theodotos, a money-changer.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, as last cited. The sect was accused of altering the gospels to suit its purposes. The charge could probably be made with truth against every sect in turn, as against the Church in general.

<sup>5</sup> In the end the doctrine declared orthodox was the opposite of what had been declared orthodox in the Sabellian and other controversies (Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 9); and all the while "the Arians and the orthodox embraced the same theology in substance" (Murdock, note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 161). An eminent modern Catholic, however, has described Arianism as "a deistic doctrine which had not the courage to bury itself in the fecund obscurities of dogma" (Ozanam, *La Civilisation chrétienne chez les Français*, 1849, p. 35).

<sup>6</sup> Gieseler, § 83, p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. the author's *Short History of Christianity*, 2nd ed. pp. 176-81.

the fourth with that of Photinus. Of this the essence was the conception of the triune deity as being not three persons but three modes or aspects of one person—a theorem welcomed in the later world by such different types of believer as Servetus, Hegel, and Coleridge. Far too reasonable for the average believer, and far too unpropitious to ritual and sacraments for the average priest, it was always condemned by the majority, though it had many adherents in the east, until the establishment of the Church made Christian persecution a far more effective process than pagan persecution had ever been.

Pelagianism, which unlike Arianism was not an ecclesiastical but a purely theological division,<sup>1</sup> fared better, the problem at issue involving the permanent crux of religious ethics. Augustine, whose supreme talent was for the getting up of a play of dialectic against every troublesome movement in turn, without regard to his previous positions,<sup>2</sup> undertook to confute Pelagius and Cælestius as he did every other innovator; and his influence was such that, after they had been acquitted of heresy by a church council in Palestine and by the Roman pontiff, the latter was induced to change his ground and condemn them, whereupon many councils followed suit, eighteen Pelagian bishops being deposed in Italy. At that period Christendom, faced by the portent of the barbarian conquest of the Empire, was well adjusted to a fatalistic theology, and too uncritical in its mood to realize the bearing of such doctrine either on conduct or on sacerdotal pretensions. But though the movement in its first form was thus crushed, and though in later forms it fell considerably short of the measure of ethical rationalism seen in the first, it soon took fresh shape in the form of so-called semi-Pelagianism, and so held its ground while any culture subsisted;<sup>3</sup> while Pelagianism on the theme of the needlessness of "prevenient grace," and the power of man to secure salvation of his own will, has been chronic in the Church.

For a concise view of the Pelagian tenets see Murdock's note on Mosheim, following Walch and Schlegel (Reid's edition, pp. 208-209). They included (1) denial that Adam's sin was inherited; (2) assertion that death is strictly natural, and not a mere punishment for Adam's sin; (3) denial that children and virtuous adults dying unbaptized are damned, a middle

<sup>1</sup> "Pelagianism is Christian rationalism" (Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. ii, ch. iv, § 3, p. 364).

<sup>2</sup> He was first a Manichean; later an anti-Manichean, denying predestination; later, as an opponent of the Pelagians, an assertor of predestination. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pt. v, § 15. As to his final Manicheanism, see Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, 3rd ed. i, 152.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. ii, ch. v, § 1 (p. 386).



state being provided for them; (4) assertion that good acts come of a good will, and that the will is free; grace being an enlightenment of the understanding, and not indispensable to all men. The relative rationalism of these views is presumptively to be traced to the facts that Pelagius was a Briton and Cælestius an Irishman, and that both were Greek scholars. (When tried in Palestine they spoke Greek, like the council, but the accuser could speak only Latin.) They were thus bred in an atmosphere not yet laden with Latin dogma. In "confuting" them Augustine developed the doctrine (intelligible as that of an elderly polemist in a decadent society) that all men are predestined to salvation or damnation by God's "mere good pleasure"—a demoralizing formula which he at times hedged with illogical qualifications. (Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, as cited, p. 210; Gieseler, § 87.) But an orthodox champion of Augustine describes him as putting the doctrine without limitations (Rev. W. R. Clarke, *St. Augustine*, in "The Fathers for English Readers" series, p. 132). It was never adopted in the east (Gieseler, p. 387), but became part of Christian theology, especially under Protestantism. On the other hand, the Council of Trent erected several Pelagian doctrines into articles of faith; and the Protestant churches have in part since followed. See Sir W. Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, pp. 493-94, note; and Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, i, 142, 149.

The Latin Church thus finally maintained in religion the tradition of sworn adherence to sectarian formulas which has been already noted in the Roman philosophic sects, and in so doing reduced to a minimum the exercise of the reason, alike in ethics and in philosophy. Its dogmatic code was shaped under the influence of (1) Irenæus and Tertullian, who set scripture above reason and, when pressed by heretics, tradition above even scripture,<sup>1</sup> and (2) Augustine, who had the same tendencies, and whose incessant energy secured him a large influence. That influence was used not only to dogmatize every possible item of the faith, but to enforce in religion another Roman tradition, formerly confined to politics—that of systematic coercion of heretics. Before and around Augustine there had indeed been abundant mutual persecution of the bitterest kind between the parties of the Church as well as against pagans; the Donatists, in particular, with their organization of armed fanatics, the Circumcelliones, had inflicted and suffered at intervals all the worst horrors of civil war in Africa during a hundred years; Arians and Athanasians came again and again to mutual bloodshed;

<sup>1</sup>Cp. Hampden, *Bampton Lectures on The Scholastic Philosophy*, 1848, pp. xxxv-xxxvi, and refs.

and the slaying of the pagan girl-philosopher, Hypatia,<sup>1</sup> by the Christian monks of Alexandria is one of the vilest episodes in the whole history of religion. On the whole, it is past question that the amount of homicide wrought by all the pagan persecution of the earlier Christians was not a tithe of that wrought by their successors in their own quarrels. But the spirit which had so operated, and which had been repudiated even by the bitter Tertullian, was raised by Augustine to the status of a Christian dogma,<sup>2</sup> which, of course, had sufficient support in the sacred books, Judaic and Jesuit, and which henceforth inspired such an amount of murderous persecution in Christendom as the ancient world had never seen. When, the temple revenues having been already confiscated, the pagan worships were finally overthrown and the temples appropriated by the edict of Honorius in the year 408, Augustine, "though not entirely consistent, disapproved of the forcible demolition of the temples."<sup>3</sup> But he had nothing to say against the forcible suppression of their worship, and of the festivals. Ambrose went as far;<sup>4</sup> and such men as Firmicus Maternus would have had the emperors go much further.<sup>5</sup>

Economic interest had now visibly become at least as potent in the shaping of the Christian course as it had ever been in building up a pagan cult. For the humble conditions in which the earlier priests and preachers had gained a livelihood by ministering to scattered groups of poor proselytes, there had been substituted those of a State Church, adopted as such because its acquired range of organization had made it a force fit for the autocrat's purposes when others had failed. The sequent situation was more and more unfavourable to both sincerity of thought and freedom of speech. Not only did thousands of wealth-seekers promptly enter the priesthood to profit by the new endowments allotted by Constantine to the great metropolitan churches. Almost as promptly the ideal of toleration was renounced; and the Christians began against the pagans a species of persecution that proceeded on no higher motive than greed of gain. Not only were the revenues of

<sup>1</sup> Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.* bk. vii, ch. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.* 93. Cp. Schlegel's notes on Mosheim, in Reid's ed. pp. 159, 198; Rev. W. R. Clarke, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 86-87 (a defence); Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, bk. ii, ch. ii, 3rd. ed. i, 163; Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, 2e édit. i, 69-79. Harnack's confused and contradictory estimate of Augustine (*Outlines*, pt. ii, bk. ii, chs. iii, iv) ignores this issue. He notes, however (pp. 362-63), some of Augustine's countless self-contradictions.

<sup>3</sup> Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. viii; ed. cited, ii, 182, 188, and note. For the views of Ambrose see p. 184. In Gaul, St. Martin put down the old shrines by brute force. *Id.* p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Beugnot, *Histoire de la destruction du paganisme en Occident*, 1835, i, 430.

<sup>5</sup> *De errore profanarum religionum*, end.



the temples confiscated as we have seen, but a number of Christians took to the business of plundering pagans in the name of the laws of Constantius forbidding sacrifice, and confiscating the property of the temples. Libanius, in his *Oration for the Temples*<sup>1</sup> (390), addressed to Theodosius, circumstantially avers that the bands of monks and others who went about demolishing and plundering temples were also wont to rob the peasants, adding:—

They also seize the lands of some, saying "it is sacred"; and many are deprived of their paternal inheritance upon a false pretence. Thus those men thrive upon other people's ruin who say "they worship God with fasting." And if they who are wronged come to the pastor in the city.....he commends (the robbers) and rejects the others.....Moreover, if they hear of any land which has anything that can be plundered, they cry presently, "Such an one sacrificeth, and does abominable things, and a troop ought to be sent against him." And presently the self-styled reformers (*σωφρονισται*) are there..... Some of these.....deny their proceedings.....Others glory and boast and tell their exploits.....But they say, "We have only punished those who sacrifice and thereby transgress the law which forbids sacrifice." O emperor, when they say this, they lie.....Can it be thought that they who are not able to bear the sight of a collector's cloak should despise the power of your government?.....I appeal to the guardians of the law [to confirm the denial].<sup>2</sup>

The whole testimony is explicit and weighty,<sup>3</sup> and, being corroborated by Ammianus Marcellinus, is accepted by clerical historians.<sup>4</sup> Ammianus declares that some of the courtiers of the Christian emperors before Julian were "glutted with the spoils of the temples."<sup>5</sup>

The official creed, with its principle of rigid uniformity and compulsion, is now recognizable as the only expedient by which the Church could be held together for its economic ends. Under the Eastern Empire, accordingly, when once a balance of creed was attained in the Church, the same coercive ideal was enforced, with whatever differences in the creed insisted on. Whichever phase of dogma was in power, persecution of opponents went on as a matter

<sup>1</sup> See it translated in full by Lardner in his *Testimonies of Ancient Heathens*, ch. xlix. *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii.

<sup>2</sup> As to the high character of Libanius, who used his influence to succour his Christian friends in the reign of Julian, see Lardner, pp. 15-17.

<sup>3</sup> Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, bk. iii, ch. vi; vol. ii, p. 131. See the passage there cited from the Funeral Oration of Libanius *On Julian*, as to Christians building houses with temple stones; also the further passages, pp. 129, 161, 212, of Mr. King's tr. of the Oration in his *Julian the Emperor* (Bohn Lib.).

<sup>4</sup> Ammianus, xxii, 4.

of course.<sup>1</sup> Athanasians and Arians, Nestorians and Monophysites, used the same weapons to the utmost of their scope; Cyril of Alexandria led his fanatics to the pillage and expulsion of the Jews, as his underling Peter led them to the murder of Hypatia; other bishops wrought the destruction of temples throughout Egypt;<sup>2</sup> Theodosius, Marcian, St. Leo, Zeno, Justinian, all used coercion against every heresy without a scruple, affirming every verbal fantasy of dogma at the point of the sword. It was due to no survival of the love of reason that some of the more stubborn heresies, driven into communion with the new civilization of the Arabs, were the means of carrying some of the seeds of ancient thought down the ages, to fructify ultimately in the mental soil of modern Europe.

### § 5

Against the orthodox creed, apart from social and official hostility, there had early arisen critics who reasoned in terms of Jewish and pagan beliefs, and in terms of such rationalism as survived. Of the two former sorts some remains have been preserved, despite the tendency of the Church to destroy their works. Of the latter, apart from Lucian, we have traces in the Fathers and in the Neo-Platonists.

Thus Tertullian and Lactantius tell of the many who believe in a non-active and passionless God,<sup>3</sup> and disdain those who turn Christian out of fear of a hereafter; and again<sup>4</sup> of Stoics who deride the belief in demons. A third-century author quoted by Eusebius<sup>5</sup> speaks of *ἄπιστοι* who deny the divine authorship of the holy scriptures, in such a fashion as to imply that this was done by some who were not merely pagan non-Christians but deniers of inspiration. Jamblichos, too,<sup>6</sup> speaks of opponents of the worship of the Gods in his day (early in the fourth century).<sup>7</sup> In the fifth century, again, Augustine complains bitterly of those impious and reckless persons who dare to say that the evangelists differ among themselves.<sup>8</sup> He argues no less bitterly against the *increduli* and *infideles* who would not believe in immortality and the possibility of eternal torment;<sup>9</sup> and he meets them in a fashion which constantly recurs in Christian apologetics, pointing to natural anomalies, real or alleged, and concluding that since we cannot understand all

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, ch. xlvii. Bohn ed. v, 211-52, 264, 268, 272. Mosheim, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Milman, as cited, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, as cited, c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *On the Mysteries*, bk. x, ch. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *De consensu evangelistarum*, i, 10.

<sup>6</sup> *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 2; *De Ira Dei*.

<sup>7</sup> B. vi, ch. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Minucius Felix (2nd c.), *Octavius*, c. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *De civ. Dei*, xxi, 2, 5-7.



we see we should believe all we hear—from the Church. Those who derided the story of Jonah and the whale he meets by accusing them of believing the story of Arion and the dolphin.<sup>1</sup> In the same way he meets<sup>2</sup> their protest against the iniquity of eternal punishment by a juggle over the ostensible anomaly of long punishments by human law for short misdeeds. Whatever may have been his indirect value of his habit of dialectic, he again and again declares for prone faith and against the resort to reason; and to this effect may be cited a long series of Fathers and ecclesiastics, all eager to show that only in a blind faith could there be any moral merit.<sup>3</sup>

Such arguments were doubtless potent to stupefy what remained of critical faculty in the Roman world. In the same period Salvian makes a polemic against those who in Christian Gaul denied that God exercised any government on earth.<sup>4</sup> They seem, however, to have been normal Christians, driven to this view by the barbarian invasions. Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, again, seems to have attacked the Christians partly as rationalist, partly as conservative.<sup>5</sup>

In general, the orthodox polemic is interesting only insofar as it preserves that of the opposition. The *Dialogue with Trypho* by Justin Martyr (about 150) is a mere documental discussion between a Christian and a Jew, each founding on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the Christian doing nearly all of the argument. There is not a scintilla of independent rationalism in the whole tedious work.<sup>6</sup> Justin was a type of the would-be "philosopher" who confessedly would take no trouble to study science or philosophize, but who found his sphere in an endless manipulation of the texts of sacred books. But the work of the learned Origen *Against Celsus* preserves for us a large part of the *True Discourse* of Celsus, a critical and extremely well-informed argument against Christianity by a pagan of the Platonic<sup>7</sup> school in the time of Marcus Aurelius,<sup>8</sup> on grounds to a considerable extent rationalistic.<sup>9</sup> The line of rejoinder followed by Origen, one of the most cultured of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* i, 14.

<sup>2</sup> See the citations in Abailard's *Sic et non*, § 1. *Quod fides humanis rationibus sit adstruenda, et contra.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Gubernatione Dei*, i, 4.

<sup>4</sup> See Renan, *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, p. 493. As to Crescens, the enemy of Justin Martyr (2 *Apol.* c. 3), see *id.* p. 492. Cp. Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, *passim*, as to pagan objections. What remains of Porphyry will be found in Lardner's *Testimonies of the Heathen*, ch. xxxvii. Cp. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. tr. ii, 179-87.

<sup>5</sup> The *Controversy between Jason and Papiscus regarding Christ*, mentioned by Origen (*Ag. Celsus*, bk. iv, ch. 4), seems to have been of the same nature.

<sup>6</sup> Origen repeatedly calls him an Epicurean; but this is obviously false. The Platonizing Christian would not admit that a Platonist was anti-Christian.

<sup>7</sup> Origen places him in the reign of Hadrian; but the internal evidence is all against that opinion. Kain dates the treatise 177-78.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e édit. pp. 346-71.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* xxi, 11.

Fathers, is for the most part otherwise. When Celsus argues that it makes no difference by what name the Deity is called, Origen answers<sup>1</sup> that on the contrary certain God-names have a miraculous or magical virtue for the casting out of evil spirits; that this mystery is known and practised by the Egyptians and Persians; and that the mere name of Jesus has been proved potent to cast out many such demons. When, on the other hand, Celsus makes a Jew argue against the Christist creed on the basis of the Jewish story that the founder's birth was illegitimate,<sup>2</sup> the Father's answer begins in sheer amiable ineptitude,<sup>3</sup> which soon passes into shocked outcry.<sup>4</sup> In other passages he is more successful, as when he convicts Celsus's Jew of arguing alternately that the disciples were deceived, and that they were deceivers.<sup>5</sup> This part of the discussion is interesting chiefly as showing how educated Jews combated the gospels in detail, at a level of criticism not always above that of the believers. Sometimes the Jew's case is shrewdly put, as when he asks,<sup>6</sup> "Did Jesus come into the world for this purpose, that we should not believe him?"—a challenge not to be met by Origen's theology. One of the acutest of Celsus's thrusts is the remark that Jesus himself declared that miracles would be wrought after him by followers of Satan, and that the argument from miracles is thus worthless.<sup>7</sup> To this the rejoinder of Origen is suicidal; but at times the assailant, himself a believer in all manner of miracles, gives away his advantage completely enough.

Of a deeper interest are the sections in which Celsus (himself a believer in a Supreme Deity and a future state, and in a multitude of lower Powers, open to invocation) rests his case on grounds of general reason, arguing that the true Son of God must needs have brought home his mission to all mankind;<sup>8</sup> and sweeps aside as foolish the whole dispute between Jews and Christians,<sup>9</sup> of which he had given a sample. Most interesting of all are the chapters<sup>10</sup> in which the Christian cites the pagan's argument against the homocentric theory of things. Celsus insists on the large impartiality of Nature, and repudiates the fantasy that the whole scheme is adjusted to the well-being and the salvation of man. Here the Christian, standing for his faith, may be said to carry on, though in the spirit of a new fanaticism, the anti-scientific humanism first set up by Sokrates; while the pagan, though touched by religious apriorism, and prone to lapse from logic to mysticism in his turn, approaches

<sup>1</sup> B. i, cc. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> cc. 37, 39.

<sup>3</sup> B. ii, c. 49.

<sup>4</sup> B. i, cc. 28, 32.

<sup>5</sup> B. ii, c. 26.

<sup>6</sup> B. ii, c. 30.

<sup>7</sup> B. iv, cc. 23-30, 54-60, 74.

<sup>8</sup> c. 32.

<sup>9</sup> B. ii, c. 78.

<sup>10</sup> B. iii, c. 1.



the scientific standpoint of the elder thinkers who had set religion aside.<sup>1</sup> Not for thirteen hundred years was his standpoint to be regained among men. His protest against the Christian cultivation of blind faith,<sup>2</sup> which Origen tries to meet on rationalistic lines, would in a later age be regarded as conveying no imputation. Even the simple defensive subtleties of Origen are too rationalistic for the succeeding generations of the orthodox. The least embittered of the Fathers, he is in his way the most reasonable; and in his unhesitating resort to the principle of allegory, wherever his documents are too hard for belief, we see the last traces of the spirit of reason as it had been in Plato, not yet paralysed by faith. Henceforth, till a new intellectual life is set up from without, Christian thought is more and more a mere disputation over the unintelligible, in terms of documents open always to opposing constructions.

Against such minds the strictest reason would be powerless; and it was fitting enough that LUCIAN, the last of the great freethinkers of the Hellenistic world, should merely turn on popular Christianity some of his serene satire<sup>3</sup>—more, perhaps, than has come down to us; though, on the other hand, his authorship of the *De Morte Peregrini*, which speaks of the "crucified sophist," has been called in question.<sup>4</sup> The forcible-feeble dialogue *Philopatris*, falsely attributed to Lucian, and clearly belonging to the reign of Julian, is the last expression of general skepticism in the ancient literature. The writer, a bad imitator of Lucian, avows disbelief alike in the old Gods and in the new, and professes to respect, if any, the "Unknown God" of the Athenians; but he makes no great impression of intellectual sincerity. Apart from this, and the lost anti-Christian work<sup>5</sup> of Hierocles, Governor of Bithynia under Diocletian, the last direct literary opponents of ancient Christianity were Porphyry and Julian. As both were believers in many Gods, and opposed Christianity because it opposed these, neither can well rank on that score as a freethinker, even in the sense in which the speculative Gnostics were so. The bias of both, like that of Plutarch, seems to have been to the utmost latitude of religious belief; and, apart from personal provocations and the ordinary

<sup>1</sup> Cp. A. Kind, *Teleologie und Naturalismus in der altchristlichen Zeit*, 1875; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, pp. 331-40. <sup>2</sup> B. i, chs. 9-11; iii, 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 373-77.

<sup>4</sup> Christian excisions have been suspected in the *Peregrinus*, § 11 (Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker*, 1879, p. 107). But see Mr. J. M. Cotterill's *Peregrinus Proteus*, Edinburgh, 1879, for a theory of the spuriousness of the treatise, which is surmised to be a fabrication of Henri Etienne.

<sup>5</sup> *Logoi Philaletheis*, known only from the reply of Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclem*. Hierocles made much of Apollonius of Tyana, as having greatly outdone Jesus in miracles, while ranking simply as a God-beloved man.

temper of religious conservatism, it was the exiguity of the Christian creed that repelled them. Porphyry's treatise, indeed, was answered by four Fathers,<sup>1</sup> all of whose replies have disappeared, doubtless in fulfilment of the imperial edict for the destruction of Porphyry's book—a dramatic testimony to the state of mental freedom under Theodosius II.<sup>2</sup> What is known of his argument is preserved in the incidental replies of Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius, and others.<sup>3</sup> The answer of Cyril to Julian has survived, probably in virtue of Julian's status. His argumentations against the unworthy elements, the exclusiveness, and the absurdities of the Jewish and Christian faith are often reasonable enough, as doubtless were those of Porphyry;<sup>4</sup> but his own theosophic positions are hardly less vulnerable; and Porphyry's were probably no better, to judge from his preserved works. Yet it is to be said that the habitual tone and temper of the two men compares favourably with that of the polemicists on the other side. They had inherited something of the elder philosophic spirit, which is so far to seek in patristic literature, outside of Origen.

The latest expressions of rationalism among churchmen were to the full as angrily met by the champions of orthodoxy as the attacks of enemies; and, indeed, there was naturally something of bitterness in the resistance of the last few critical spirits in the Church to the fast-multiplying insanities of faith. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, the Italian monk JOVINIAN fought against the creed of celibacy and asceticism, and was duly denounced, vituperated, ecclesiastically condemned, and banished, penal laws being at the same time passed against those who adhered to him.<sup>5</sup> Contemporary with him was the Eastern AERIUS, who advocated priestly equality as against episcopacy, and objected to prayers for the dead, to fasts, and to the too significant practice of slaying a lamb at the Easter festival.<sup>6</sup> In this case matters went the length of schism. With less of practical effect, in the next century, VIGILANTIUS of Aquitaine made a more general resistance to a more manifold superstition, condemning and ridiculing the venera-

<sup>1</sup> Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris, and Philostorgius.

<sup>2</sup> Cod. Justin. *De Summa Trinitate*, l. i, tit. i, c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Citations are given by Baur, *Ch. Hist.* ii, 180 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 160. Chrysostom (*De Mundi Creatione*, vi, 3) testifies that Porphyry "led many away from the faith." He ably anticipated the "higher criticism" of the Book of Daniel. See Baur, as cited. Porphyry, like Celsus, powerfully retorted on the Old Testament the attacks made by Christians on the immorality of pagan myths, and contemned the allegorical explanations of the Christian writers as mere evasions. The pagan explanations of pagan myths, however, were of the same order.

<sup>5</sup> Gieseler, § 106, ii, 75. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 22.

<sup>6</sup> Gieseler, § 106, vol. ii, p. 74; Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 2; and Schlegel's note in Reid's ed. p. 152.



tion of tombs and bones of martyrs, pilgrimages to shrines, the miracle stories therewith connected, and the practices of fasting, celibacy, and the monastic life. He too was promptly put down, largely by the efforts of his former friend Jerome, the most voluble and the most scurrilous pietist of his age, who had also denounced the doctrine of Jovinian.<sup>1</sup> For centuries no such appeal was heard in the western Church.

The spirit of reason, however, is well marked at the beginning of the fifth century in a pagan writer who belongs more truly to the history of freethought than either Julian or Porphyry. MACROBIUS, a Roman patrician of the days of Honorius, works out in his *Saturnalia*, with an amount of knowledge and intelligence which for the time is remarkable, the principle that all the Gods are but personifications of aspects or functions of the Sun. But such doctrine must have been confined, among pagans, to the cultured few; and the monotheism of the same writer's treatise *On the Dream of Scipio* was probably not general even among the remaining pagans of the upper class.<sup>2</sup>

After Julian, open rationalism being already extinct, anti-Christian thought was simply tabooed; and though the leading historians for centuries were pagans, they only incidentally venture to betray the fact. It is told, indeed, that in the days of Valens and Valentinian an eminent physician named Posidonius, son of a great physician and brother of another, was wont to say, "that men do not grow fanatic by the agency of evil spirits, but merely by the superfluity of certain evil humours; and that there is no power in evil spirits to assail the human race";<sup>3</sup> but though that opinion may be presumed to have been held by some other physicians, the special ascription of it to Posidonius is a proof that it was rarely avowed. With public lecturing forbidden, with the philosophic schools at Athens closed and plundered by imperial force,<sup>4</sup> with heresy ostracized, with pagan worship, including the strong rival cult of Mithraism, outwardly suppressed by the same power,<sup>5</sup> unbelief was naturally little heard of after the fifth century.

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Hist. of Chr.* bk. iii, ch. xi (ii, 268-70); Mosheim, 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 14; Gilly, *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 8, 389 sq., 470 sq. As to Jerome's persecuting ferocity see also Gieseler, ii, 65 note. For a Catholic polemic on Jerome's side see Amedée Thierry, *Saint Jérôme*, 2e édit. pp. 141, 363-66.

<sup>2</sup> See a good account of the works of Macrobius in Prof. Dill's *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, bk. i, ch. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Philostorgius, *Eccles. Hist. Epit.* bk. viii, ch. x.

<sup>4</sup> By Justinian in 529. The banished thinkers were protected by Chosroes in Persia, who secured them permission to return (Gibbon, Bohn ed. iv, 355-56; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, i, 277, 287). Theodosius II had already forbidden all public lectures by independent teachers (*id.* pp. 282-83).

<sup>5</sup> Theodosius I, Arcadius, and Theodosius II (379-450) successively passed laws forbidding and persecuting paganism (Finlay, i, 286; Beugnot, *Hist. de la destr. du paganisme en*

About its beginning we find Chrysostom boasting<sup>1</sup> that the works of the anti-Christian writers had persuaded nobody, and had almost disappeared. As regarded open teaching, it was only too true, though the statement clashes with Chrysostom's own complaint that Porphyry had led many away from the faith.<sup>2</sup> Proclus was still to come (410-485), with his eighteen *Arguments against the Christians*, proceeding on the principle, still cherished from the old science, that the world was eternal. But such teaching could not reach even the majority of the more educated; and the Jewish dogma of creation *ex nihilo* became sacrosanct truth for the darkening world. In the east Eusebius,<sup>3</sup> and in the west Lactantius,<sup>4</sup> expressed for the whole Church a boundless contempt of everything in the nature of scientific research or discussion; and it was in fact at an end for the Christian world for well-nigh a thousand years. For Lactantius, the doctrine of a round earth and an antipodes was mere nonsense; he discusses the thesis with the horse-laughter of a self-satisfied savage.<sup>5</sup> Under the feet of arrogant and blatant ignorance we see trampled the first form of the doctrine of gravitation, not to be recovered for an æon. Proclus himself cherished some of the grossest pagan superstitions; and the few Christians who had in them something of the spirit of reason, as Cosmas "Indicopleustes," "the Indian navigator," who belongs to the sixth century, were turned away from what light they had by their sacred books. Cosmas was a Nestorian, denying the divinity of Mary, and a rational critic as regards the orthodox fashion of applying Old Testament prophecies to Jesus.<sup>6</sup> But whereas pagan science had inferred that the earth is a sphere, his Bible taught him that it is an oblong plain; and the great aim of his *Topographia Christiana, sive Christianorum opinio de mundo*, was to prove this against those who still cultivated science.

Such pleadings were not necessary for the general Christian public, who knew nothing save what their priests taught them. In Chrysostom's day this was already the case. There remained but a

*occident*, i, 350 sq.). Mithraism was suppressed in the same period (Jerome, *Epist.* cvii, *ad Laetam*, Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.* bk. v, ch. xvi). It is to be remembered that Constantine and Constantius, the sons of Constantine, had commenced, at least on paper, to persecute paganism as soon as their father's new creed was sufficiently established (Cod. Theod. xvi, 10, 2, 4), and this with the entire approval of the whole Church. It was not their fault that it subsisted till the time of Theodosius II (cp. Gieseler, § 75, pp. 306-308; and Beugnot, i, 138-48). On the edict of Theodosius I see Milman, bk. iii, ch. viii: ed. cited, p. 186.

<sup>1</sup> In *S. Babylon, contra Julianum*, c. ii. Cp. his Hom. iv on 1st Cor. Eng. tr. 1839, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> There is also a suggestion in one passage of Chrysostom (Hom. in 1 Cor. vi, 2, 3) that some Christians tended to doubt the actuality of apostolic miracles, seeing that no miracles took place in their own day.

<sup>3</sup> *Præparatio Evangelica*, xv, 61. <sup>4</sup> *Div. Inst.* iii, 3. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* iii, 24. <sup>6</sup> *Topographia*, lib. v, cited by Murdock in note on Mosheim, 5 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5, Reid's ed. p. 192. Cp. same ed. p. 219, note; and Gibbon, Bohn ed. iv, 259; v, 319.



few rational heresies. One of the most notable was that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the head of the school of Antioch and the teacher of Nestorius, who taught that many of the Old Testament prophecies commonly applied to Jesus had reference to pre-Christian events, and discriminated critically among the sacred books. That of Job he pronounced to be merely a poem derived from a pagan source, and the Song of Songs he held to be a mere epithalamium of no religious significance. In his opinion Solomon had the λόγος γνώσεως, the love of knowledge, but not the λόγος σοφίας, the love of wisdom.<sup>1</sup> No less remarkable was the heresy of Photinus, who taught that the Trinity was a matter not of persons, but of modes of deity.<sup>2</sup> Such thinking must be pronounced the high-water mark of rational criticism in the ancient Church; and its occurrence in an age of rapid decay is memorable enough. But in the nature of things it could meet with only the scantiest support; and the only critical heresy which bulked at all largely was that of the Unitarian Anomœans or Eunomians,<sup>3</sup> who condemned the worship of relics,<sup>4</sup> and made light of scriptural inspiration when texts, especially from the Old Testament, were quoted against them.<sup>5</sup> Naturally Chrysostom himself denounced them as unbelievers. Save for these manifestations, the spirit of sane criticism had gone from the Christian world, with science, with art, with philosophy, with culture. But the verdict of time is given in the persistent recoil of the modern spirit from the literature of the age of faith to that of the elder age of nascent reason; and the historical outcome of the state of things in which Chrysostom rejoiced was the re-establishment of universal idolatry and practical polytheism in the name of the creed he had preached. Every species of superstition known to paganism subsisted, slightly transformed. While the emperors savagely punished the pagan soothsayers, the Christians held by the same fundamental delusion; and against the devices of pagan magic, in the reality of which they unquestioningly believed, they professed triumphantly to practise their own sorceries of holy water, relics, prayer, and exorcism, no man daring to impugn the insanities of faith.<sup>6</sup> On the face of religious life, critical reason was extinct.

<sup>1</sup> *Acta concilia Constantinop.* apud Harduin, ii, 65, 71.

<sup>2</sup> See Schlegel's note on Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 19.

<sup>3</sup> The first name came from Ἀνόμοιος, "unlike-natured (to the Father)," that being their primary doctrinal heresy concerning Jesus. The second seems to have been a euphemism of their own making, with the sense of "holding the good law."

<sup>4</sup> Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cc. 9, 11. <sup>5</sup> Epiphanius, *Adv. Hæres.* lxx, § 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, viii, 15-19; xxi, 6; *De Trinitate*, iii, 12, 13 (7, 8); *Epist.* cxxxviii, 18-20; *Sermo* cc, in *Epiph. Dom.* ii; Jerome, *Vita S. Hilarion.* cc. 6, 37.

## § 6

It might safely have been inferred, but it is a matter of proved fact, that while the higher intellectual life was thus being paralysed, the primary intellectual virtues were attained. As formerly in Jewry, so now in Christendom, the practice of pious fraud became normal: all early Christian literature, and most of the ecclesiastical history of many succeeding centuries, is profoundly compromised by the habitual resort to fiction, forgery, and interpolation. The mystical poetry of the pagans, the Jewish history of Josephus, the gospels, the Epistles, all were interpolated in the same spirit as had inspired the production of new Gospels, new Epistles, new books of Acts, new Sibylline verses. And even where to this tendency there was opposed the growing demand of the organized Church for a faithful text, when the documents had become comparatively ancient, the disposition to invent and suppress, to reason crookedly, to delude and mislead, was normal among churchmen. This is the verdict of orthodox ecclesiastical history, a dozen times repeated.<sup>1</sup> It of course carries no surprise for those who have noted the religious doctrine of Plato, of Polybius, of Cicero, of Varro, of Strabo, of Dio Cassius.

While intelligence thus retrograded under the reign of faith, it is impossible to maintain, in the name of historical science, the conventional claim that the faith wrought a countervailing good. What moral betterment there was in the decaying Roman world was a matter of the transformed social conditions, and belongs at least as much to paganism as to Christianity: even the asceticism of the latter, which in reality had no reformative virtue for society at large, was a pre-Christian as well as an anti-Christian phenomenon. It is indeed probable that in the times of persecution the Christian community would be limited to the more serious and devoted types<sup>2</sup>—that is to say, to those who would tend to live worthily under any creed. But that the normal Christian community was superior in point of morals is a poetic hallucination, set up by the legends concerning the martyrs and by the vauntings of the Fathers, which are demonstrably untrustworthy. The assertion, still at times made by professed Positivists, that the discredit of the marriage tie in Roman

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 8, 15; 3 Cent. pt. i, ch. i, § 5; pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 10, 11; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 3, 16; Gieseler, § 63, p. 235; Waddington, *Hist. of the Church*, 1833, pp. 38-39; Milman, *Hist. of Chr.* bk. iv, ch. iii, ed. cited, ii, 337. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the explicit admissions of Mosheim, *E. H.* 2 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 16; 3 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 4, 6; 4 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 8; ch. iii, § 17; Gieseler, § 103, vol. ii, p. 56. It is to be noted, however, that even the martyrs were at times bad characters who sought in martyrdom remission for their sins (Gieseler, § 74, p. 206; De Wette, as there cited).



life necessitated a new religion, and that the new religion was regenerative, is only a quasi-scientific variation of the legend.

The evidence as to the failure of the faith to reform its adherents is continuous from the first generation onwards. "Paul" complains bitterly of the sexual licence among his first Corinthian converts (1 Cor. v, 1, 2), and seeks to check it by vehement commands, some mystical (*id. v. 5*), some prescribing ostracism (*vv. 9-13*)—a plain confession of failure, and a complete reversal of the prescription in the gospel (Mt. xviii, 22). If that could be set aside, the command as to divorce could be likewise. Justin Martyr (*Dial. with Trypho*, ch. 141) describes the orthodox Jews of his day as of all men the most given to polygamy and arbitrary divorce. (Cp. Deut. xxiv, 1; Edersheim, *History*, p. 294.) Then the Christian assumption as to Roman degeneration and Eastern virtue cannot be sustained.

At the beginning of the third century we have the decisive evidence of Tertullian that many of the charges of immorality made by serious pagans against Christians were in large part true. First he affirms (*Ad Nationes*, l. i, c. 5) that the pagan charges are not true of all, "not even of the greatest part of us." In regard to the charge of incest (c. 16), instead of denying it as the earlier apologist Minucius Felix had done in the age of persecution, he merely argues that the same offence occurs through ignorance among the pagans. The chapter concludes by virtually admitting the charge with regard to misconduct in "the mysteries." Still later, when he has turned Montanist, Tertullian explicitly charges his former associates with sexual licence (*De Jejuniis*, cc. 1, 17; *De Virginibus Velandis*, c. 14), pointing now to the heathen as showing more regard for monogamy than do the Christians (*De Exhort. Castitatis*, c. 13).

From the fourth century onward the history of the Church reveals at every step a conformity on the part of its members to average pagan practice. The third canon of the Nicene Council forbids clerics of all ranks from keeping as companions or housekeepers women who are not their close blood relations. In the fifth century Salvian denounces the Christians alike of Gaul and Africa as being boundlessly licentious in comparison with the Arian barbarians (*De Gubernatione Dei*, lib. 5, 6, 7). They do not even, he declares, deny the charge, contenting themselves with claiming superior orthodoxy. (Cp. Bury, *Hist. of the Later Roman Empire*, i, 198-99, and Finlay, ii, 219, for another point of view.) On all hands heresy was reckoned the one deadly sin (Gieseler, § 74, p. 295, and refs.), and all real misdeeds came to seem venial by comparison. As to sexual vice and crime among the Christianized Germans, see Gieseler, § 125, vol. ii, 158-60.

In the East the conditions were the same. The story of the indecent performances of Theodora on the stage (Gibbon, ch. xl), probably untrue of her, implies that such practices openly occurred. Milman (*Hist. of Chr.* bk. iv, ch. ii. ed. cited, ii, 327) recognizes general indecency, and notes that Zosimus charged it on Christian rule. Salvian speaks of unlimited obscenity in the theatres of Christian Gaul (*De Gub. Dei*, l. 6). Cp. Gibbon as to the character of the devout Justinian's minister Trebonian; who, however, was called an atheist. (Suidas, s.v.) On the collapse of the iconoclastic movement, licence became general (Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 162). But even in the fourth century Chrysostom's writings testify to the normality of all the vices, as well as the superstitions, that Christianity is supposed to have banished; the churches figuring, like the ancient temples, as places of assignation. (Cp. the extracts of Lavollée, *Les Mœurs Byzantines*, in *Essais de littérature et d'histoire*, 1891, pp. 48-62, 89; the S.P.C.K.'s *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, 1875, pp. 6, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102-104, 108, 194; Chrysostom's *Homilies*, Eng. tr. 1839, Hom. xii on 1st Cor. pp. 159-64; Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cited by Gieseler, ii, 66, note 19, and in Gilly's *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 406-407.) The clergy were among the most licentious of all, and Chrysostom had repeatedly to preach against them (Lavollée, ch. iv; Mosheim, as last cited; Gibbon, ch. xlvii, Bohn ed. iv, 232). The position of women was practically what it had been in post-Alexandrian Greece and Asia-Minor (Lavollée, ch. v; cp. *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, pp. 180-82); and the practice corresponded. In short, the supposition that the population of Constantinople as we see it under Justinian, or that of Alexandria in the same age, could have been morally austere, is fantastic.

It would indeed be unintelligible that intellectual decline without change of social system should put morals on a sound footing. The very asceticism which seeks to mortify the body is an avowal of the vice from which it recoils, and insofar as this has prevailed under Christianity it has specifically hindered general temperance,<sup>1</sup> inasmuch as the types capable of self-rule thus leave no offspring.

On the other hand, with the single exception of the case of the gladiatorial combats (which had been denounced in the first century by the pagan Seneca,<sup>2</sup> and in the fourth by the pagan Libanius, but lasted in Rome long after Christianity had become the State religion;<sup>3</sup> while the no less cruel combats of men with wild beasts were suppressed only when the finances of the falling Empire could no longer

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Gieseler, ii, 67-68.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.* vii, 5; xcv, 33. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the Bohn ed. of Gibbon, note by clerical editor, iii, 359.



maintain them),<sup>1</sup> the vice of cruelty seems to have been in no serious degree cast out.<sup>2</sup> Cruelty to slaves was certainly not less than in the Rome of the Antonines; and Chrysostom<sup>3</sup> denounces just such atrocities by cruel mistresses as had been described by Horace and Juvenal. The story of the slaying of Hypatia, indeed, is decisive as to Christian ferocity.<sup>4</sup>

In fine, the entire history of Christian Egypt, Asia, and Africa, progressively decadent till their easy conquest by the Saracens, and the entire history of the Christian Byzantine empire, at best stagnant in mental and material life during the thousand years of its existence, serve conclusively to establish the principle that in the absence of freethought no civilization can progress. More completely than any of the ancient civilizations to which they succeeded, they cast out or were denuded of the spirit of free reason. The result was strictly congruous. The process, of course, was one of socio-political causation throughout; and the rule of dogma was a symptom or effect of the process, not the extraneous cause. But that is only the clinching of the sociological lesson.

Of a deep significance, in view of the total historical movement, is the philosophical teaching of the last member of the ancient Roman world who exhibited philosophical capacity—the long famous BOETHIUS, minister of the conqueror Theodoric, who put him to death in the year 525. Ostensibly from the same hand we have the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which is substantially non-Christian, and a number of treatises expounding orthodox Christian dogma. In the former "we find him in strenuous opposition.....to the Christian theory of creation; and his Dualism is at least as apparent as Plato's. We find him coquetting with the anti-Christian doctrine of the immortality of the world, and assuming a position with regard to sin which is ultra-Pelagian and utterly untenable by a Christian theologian. We find him, with death before his eyes, deriving consolation not from any hopes of a resurrection.....but from the present contempt of all earthly pain and ill which his divine mistress, 'the perfect solace of wearied

<sup>1</sup> The express declaration of Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. 6. On the general question compare Mr. Farrer's *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. x; Milman, as last cited, p. 331; and Gieseler, ii, 71, note 6. The traditional view that the games were suppressed by Honorius, though accepted by Gibbon and by Professor Dill (*Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 2nd ed. p. 56), appears to be an error. Cp. Beugnot, *Destr. du Paganisme*, ii, 25; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, i, 236.

<sup>2</sup> As to the specially cruel use of judicial torture by the later Inquisition, see H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, 3rd ed. p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> Lavollée, as cited, p. 92. Cp. *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, p. 112, and the admissions of Milman, bk. iv, ch. i.

<sup>4</sup> As to the spirit of hatred roused by controversy among believers, see Gieseler, § 104, vol. ii, pp. 64-67; and Ullmann's *Gregory of Nazianzum*, Eng. tr. 1851, pp. 177-80.

souls,' has taught him."<sup>1</sup> Seeing that Theodoric, though a professed admirer of the ancient life, had absolutely put down, on pain of death,<sup>2</sup> every remaining religious practice of paganism, it is certain that Boethius must have officially professed Christianity; but his book seems to make it certain that he was not a believer. The only theory on which the expounder of such an essentially pagan philosophy can be conceived as really the author of the Christian tractates ascribed to Boethius is that, under the stroke of undeserved ruin and unjust doom, the thinker turned away from the creed of his official life and sought healing in the wisdom of the older world.<sup>3</sup> Whether we accept this solution or, in despite of the specific testimony, reject the theological tractates as falsely ascribed—either by their writer or by others—to Boethius,<sup>4</sup> the significant fact remains that it was not the Christian tracts but the pagan *Consolation* that passed down to the western nations of the Middle Ages as the last great intellectual legacy from the ancient world. It had its virtue for an age of mental bondage, because it preserved some pulse of the spirit of free thought.

<sup>1</sup> H. Fraser Stewart, *Boethius: An Essay*, 1891, pp. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Beugnot, *Destruction du Paganisme*, ii, 282-83.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 159. Mr. Stewart in another passage (p. 106) argues that "*The Consolation* is intensely artificial"—this by way of explaining that it was a deliberate exercise, not representing the real or normal state of its author's mind. Yet he has finally to avow (p. 107) that "it remains a very noble book"—a character surely incompatible with intense artificiality.

<sup>4</sup> This is the view of Maurice (*Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. 1859, pp. 14-16), who decides that Boethius was neither a Christian nor a "pagan"—i.e., a believer in the pagan Gods. This is simply to say that he was a rationalist—a "pagan philosopher," like Aristotle. But, as is noted by Prof. Bury (ed. of Gibbon, iv, 199), Boethius's authorship of a book, *De sancta trinitate, et capitula quaedam dogmatica, et librum contra Nestorium*, is positively asserted in the *Anecdota Holderi* (ed. by Usener, Leipzig, 1877, p. 4), a fragment found in a 10th century MS.



CHAPTER VIII  
FREETHOUGHT UNDER ISLAM<sup>1</sup>

§ 1

THE freethinking of Mohammed may be justly said to begin and end with his rejection of popular polytheism and his acceptance of the idea of a single God. That idea he ostensibly held as a kind of revelation, not as a result of any traceable process of reasoning; and he affirmed it from first to last as a fanatic. One of the noblest of fanatics he may be, but hardly more. Denouncing all idolatry, he anchored his creed to the Ka'aba, the sacred black stone of the remote past, which is to this day its most revered object.

That the monotheistic idea, in its most vivid form, reached him in middle age by way of a vision is part of the creed of his followers; and that it derived in some way from Jews, or Persians, or Christians, as the early unbelievers declared,<sup>2</sup> is probable enough. But there is evidence that among his fellow-Arabs the idea had taken some slight root before his time, even in a rationalistic form, and it is clear that there were before his day many believers, though also many unbelievers, in a future state.<sup>3</sup> There is no good ground for the oft-repeated formula about the special monotheistic and other religious proclivities of "the Semite";<sup>4</sup> Semites being subject to religious influences like other peoples, in terms of culture and environment. The Moslems themselves preserved a tradition that one Zaid, who died five years before the Prophet received his first inspiration, had of his own accord renounced idolatry without becoming either Jew or Christian; but on being told by a Jew to

<sup>1</sup> The strict meaning of this term, given by Mohammed ("the true religion with God is Islam"; Sura, iii, 17), is "submission"—such being the attitude demanded by the Prophet. "Moslem" or "Muslim" means one who accepts Islam. Koran means strictly, not "book," but "reading" or recitation.

<sup>2</sup> Rodwell's tr. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. p. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Sale, *Preliminary Discourse* to tr. of the Koran, ed. 1833, i, 42; Muir's *Life of Mohammed*, ed. Weir, 1912, p. 78. Cp. Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, 1856, p. 35. The late Prof. Palmer, in introd. to his tr. of the Koran (Sacred Books of the East series), i, p. xv, says that "By far the greater number had ceased to believe in anything at all"; but this is an extravagance, confuted by himself in other passages—e.g. p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> These generalizations are always matched, and cancelled, by others from the same sources. Thus Prof. D. B. Macdonald writes of "the always flighty and skeptical Arabs," and, a few pages later, of the God-fearing fatalism "of all Muslim thought, the faith to which the Semite ever returns in the end." *Development of Muslim Theology*, etc. (in "Semitic Series"), New York, 1903, pp. 122, 126.

become a *Hanyf*,<sup>1</sup> that is to say, of the religion of Abraham, who worshipped nothing but God, he at once agreed.<sup>2</sup> In the oldest extant biography of Mohammed an address of Zaid's has been preserved, of which six passages are reproduced in the Koran;<sup>3</sup> and there are other proofs<sup>4</sup> that the way had been partly made for Mohammedanism before Mohammed, especially at Medina, to which he withdrew (the Hej'ra) with his early followers when his fellow-tribesmen would not accept his message. He uses the term *Hanyf* repeatedly as standing for his own doctrine.<sup>5</sup> In some of the Arab poetry of the generation before Mohammed, again, there is "a deep conviction of the unity of God, and of his elevation over all other beings," as well as a clearly developed sense of moral responsibility.<sup>6</sup> The doctrine of a Supreme God was indeed general;<sup>7</sup> and Mohammed's insistence on the rejection of the lesser deities or "companions of God" was but a preaching of unitarianism to half-professed monotheists who yet practised polytheism and idolatry. The Arabs at his time, in short, were on the same religious plane as the Christians, but with a good deal of unbelief; "Zendékism" or rationalistic deism (or atheism) being charged in particular on Mohammed's tribe, the Koreish;<sup>8</sup> and the Prophet used traditional ideas to bring them to his unitary creed. In one case he even temporarily accepted their polytheism.<sup>9</sup> The several tribes were further to some extent monolatrous,<sup>10</sup> somewhat as were the Semitic tribes of Palestine; and before Mohammed's time a special worshipper of the star Sirius sought to persuade the Koreish to give up their idols and adore that star alone. Thus between their

<sup>1</sup> The word means either convert or pervert; in Heb. and Syr. "heretic"; in Arabic, "orthodox." It must not be confounded with *Hanyfite*, the name of an orthodox sect, founded by one Hanyfa.

<sup>2</sup> See Rodwell's tr. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. pp. xvi, xvii; and Sura, xvi (lxxiii in Rodwell's chron. arrangement), v, 121, p. 252, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed*, 1861-65, i, 83 sq. Cp. p. 60 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Rodwell, p. 497, note to Sura iii (xcvii) 19; and pref. p. xvi; Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme*, 1847, i, 321-26; Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, pp. 69, 149. "To the great mass of the citizens of Mecca the new doctrine was simply the Hanyfism to which they had become accustomed; and they did not at first trouble themselves at all about the matter." Palmer, introd. to tr. of Koran, i, p. xxiv. Cp. Sprenger, as cited, i, 46-60, 65.

<sup>5</sup> The word *Hanyf* or *Hanif* recurs in Sura ii, 129; iii, 60, 89; iv, 124; vi, 79, 162; x, 105, xvi, 121; xxii, 32; xxx, 29. Cp. H. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'Islamisme* 1896, pp. 42-43. Palmer's translation, marred as it unfortunately is by slanginess, is on such points specially trustworthy. Rodwell's does not always indicate the use of the word *Hanyf*; but the German version of Ullmann, the French of Kasimirski, and Sale's, do not indicate it at all. Sprenger (p. 43) derives the *Hanyfs* from Essenes who had almost lost all knowledge of the Bible. Cp. p. 67. Prof. Macdonald writes that the word "is of very doubtful derivation. But we have evidence from heathen Arab poetry that these *Hanyfs* were regarded as much the same as Christian monks, and that the term *hanif* was used as a synonym for *rahib*, monk." Work cited, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> Sprenger, as cited, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Sale's *Prelim. Discourse*, as cited, i, 38; and Palmer, introd. p. xv; and Nicholson, pp. 139-40.

<sup>8</sup> Al Mostarraf, cited by Pococke, *Specimen Histor. Arab.* p. 136; Sale, *Prelim. Disc.* as cited, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Nicholson, pp. 155-56 and refs.

<sup>10</sup> Sale, as cited, pp. 39-41.



partially developed monotheism, their partial familiarity with *Hanyf* monotheism, and their common intercourse with the nominally monotheistic Jews and Christians, many Arabs were in a measure prepared for the Prophet's doctrine; which, for the rest, embodied many of their own traditions and superstitions as well as many orally received from Christians and Jews.

"The Koran itself," says Palmer, "is, indeed, less the invention or conception of Mohammed than a collection of legends and moral axioms borrowed from desert lore and couched in the language and rhythm of desert eloquence, but adorned with the additional charm of enthusiasm. Had it been merely Mohammed's own invented discourses, bearing only the impress of his personal style, the Koran could never have appealed with so much success to every Arab-speaking race as a miracle of eloquence."<sup>1</sup>

Kuenen challenges Sprenger's conclusions and sums up: "We need not deny that Mohammed had predecessors; but we must deny that tradition gives us a faithful representation of them, or is correct in calling them *hanyfs*." On the other hand, he concedes that "Mohammed made Islam out of elements which were supplied to him very largely from outside, and which had a whole history behind them already, so that he could take them up as they were without further elaboration."<sup>2</sup>

"During the first century of Islam the forging of Traditions became a recognized political and religious weapon, of which all parties availed themselves. Even men of the strictest piety practised this species of fraud, and maintained that the end justified the means."<sup>3</sup>

The final triumph of the religion, however, was due neither to the elements of its Sacred Book nor to the moral or magnetic power of the Prophet. This power it was that won his first adherents, who were mostly his friends and relatives, or slaves to whom his religion was a species of enfranchisement.<sup>4</sup> From that point forward his success was military—thanks, that is, to the valour of his followers—his fellow citizens never having been won in mass to his teaching.<sup>5</sup> Such success as his might conceivably be gained by a mere military chief. Nor could the spread of Islam after his death have taken place save in virtue of the special opportunities

<sup>1</sup> Palmer, introd. to his *Haroun Alraschid*, 1882, p. 14. Cp. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'islamisme*, p. 44, controverting Kuenen.

<sup>2</sup> Hibbert Lectures, *On National and Universal Religions*, ed. 1901, p. 21 and Note II.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> Rodwell, note to Sura xvi (R. I.), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Sprenger estimates that at his death the number really converted to his doctrine did not exceed a thousand. Cp. Nicholson, pp. 153-58.

for conquest lying before its adherents—opportunities already seen by Mohammed, either with the eye of statesmanship or with that of his great general, Omar.<sup>1</sup> It is an error to assume, as is still commonly done, that it was the unifying and inspiring power of the religion that wrought the Saracen conquests. Warlike northern barbarians had overrun the Western Empire without any such stimulus; the prospect of booty and racial kinship sufficed them for the conquest of a decadent community; and the same conditions existed for the equally warlike Saracens,<sup>2</sup> who also, before Mohammed, had learned something of the military art from the Græco-Romans.<sup>3</sup> Their religious ardour would have availed them little against the pagan legions of the unbelieving Cæsar; and as a matter of fact they could never conquer, though they curtailed, the comparatively weak Byzantine Empire; its moderate economic resources and traditional organization sufficing to sustain it, despite intellectual decadence, till the age of Saracen greatness was over. Nor did their faith ever unify them save ostensibly for purposes of common warfare against the racial foe—a kind of union attained in all ages and with all varieties of religion. Fierce domestic strifes broke out as soon as the Prophet was dead. It would be as true to say that the common racial and military interest against the Græco-Roman and Persian States unified the Moslem parties, as that Islam unified the Arab tribes and factions. Apart from the inner circle of converts, indeed, the first conquerors were in mass not at all deeply devout, and many of them maintained to the end of their generation, and after his death, the unbelief which from the first met the Prophet at Mecca.<sup>4</sup> Against the creed of Mohammed "the conservative and material instincts of the people of the desert rose in revolt; and although they became Moslems *en masse*, the majority of them neither believed in Islam nor knew what it meant. Often their motives were frankly utilitarian: they expected that Islam would bring them luck.....If things went ill, they blamed Islam and turned their backs on it."<sup>5</sup> It is told of a Moslem chief of the early days that he said: "If there were a God, I would swear by his

<sup>1</sup> Renan ascribes the idea wholly to Omar. *Études d'histoire et de critique*, ed. 1862, p. 250. The faithful have preserved a sly saying that "Omar was many a time of a certain opinion, and the Koran was then revealed accordingly." Nöldeke, *Enc. Brit. art. on KORAN*, in *Sketches from Eastern History*, 1892, p. 28. On the other hand, Sedillot decides (*Histoire des Arabes*, 1854, p. 60) that "in Mohammed it is the political idea that dominates." So Nicholson (p. 169): "At Medina the days of pure religious enthusiasm have passed away for ever, and the prophet is overshadowed by the statesman." Cp. pp. 173, 175.

<sup>2</sup> On the measure of racial unity set up by Abyssinian attacks as well as by the pretensions of the Byzantine and Persian empires, see Sedillot, pp. 30, 38. Cp. Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, Amsterdam, 1894, pp. 1-4, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Stanislas Guyard, *La Civilisation Musulmane*, 1884, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Renan, *Études*, pp. 257-66; Hauri, *Der Islam in seinem Einfluss auf das Leben seiner Bekenner*, 1882, pp. 64-65; Nicholson, p. 235. It was at Medina that a strict Mohammedanism first arose.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholson, pp. 178-79, and ref.



name that I did not believe in him."<sup>1</sup> A general fanaticism grew up later. But had there been no Islam, enterprising Arabs would probably have overrun Syria and Persia and Africa and Spain all the same.<sup>2</sup> Attila went further, and he is not known to have been a monotheist or a believer in Paradise. Nor were Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane indebted to religious faith for their conquests.

On the other hand, when a Khalifate was anywhere established by military force, the faith would indeed serve as a nucleus of administration, and further as a means of resisting the insidious propaganda of the rival faith, which might have been a source of political danger. It was their Sacred Book and Prophet that saved the Arabs from accepting the religion of the states they conquered as did the Goths and Franks. The faith thus so far preserved their military polity when that was once set up; but it was not the faith that made the polity possible, or gave the power of conquest, as is conventionally held. At most, it partly facilitated their conquests by detaching a certain amount of purely superstitious support from the other side. And it never availed to unify the race, or the Islamic peoples. On the fall of Othman "the ensuing civil wars rent the unity of Islam from top to bottom, and the wound has never healed."<sup>3</sup> The feud between Northern and Southern Arabs "rapidly developed and extended into a permanent racial enmity."<sup>4</sup> And when, after the Ommayade dynasty had totally failed to unify Semite and Aryan in Persia, the task was partially accomplished by the Abassides, it was not through any greater stress of piety, but by way of accepting the inevitable, after generations of division and revolt.<sup>5</sup>

## § 2

It may perhaps be more truly claimed for the Koran that it was the basis of Arab scholarship; since it was in order to elucidate its text that the first Arab grammars and dictionaries and literary collections were made.<sup>6</sup> Here again, however, the reflection arises that some such development would have occurred in any case, on the basis of the abundant pre-Islamic poetry, given but the material conquests. The first conquerors were illiterate, and had to resort to the services and the organization of the conquered<sup>7</sup> for all purposes of administrative writings, using for a time even the Greek and

<sup>1</sup> Hauri, *Der Islam*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Montesquieu, *Grandeur et décadence des Romains*, ch. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholson, p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> Van Vloten, p. 70 and *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Prof. Guyard, as cited, pp. 16, 51; C. E. Oelsner, *Des effets de la religion de Mohammed*, etc., 1810, p. 130.

<sup>7</sup> Guyard, p. 21; Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, introd. p. 19.

Persian languages. There was nothing in the Koran itself to encourage literature; and the first conquerors either despised or feared that of the conquered.<sup>1</sup>

When the facts are inductively considered, it appears that the Koran was from the first rather a force of intellectual fixation than one of stimulus. As we have seen, there was a measure of rationalism as well as of monotheism among the Arabs before Mohammed; and the Prophet set his face violently against all unbelief. The word "unbeliever" or "infidel" in the Koran normally signifies merely "rejector of Mohammed"; but a number of passages<sup>2</sup> show that there were specific unbelievers in the doctrine of a future state as well as in miracles; and his opponents put to him challenges which showed that they rationally disbelieved his claim to inspiration.<sup>3</sup> Hence, clearly, the scarcity of miracles in his early legend, on the Arab side. On a people thus partly "refined, skeptical, incredulous,"<sup>4</sup> much of whose poetry showed no trace of religion,<sup>5</sup> the triumph of Islam gradually imposed a tyrannous dogma, entailing abundance of primitive superstition under the ægis of monotheistic doctrine. Some moral service it did compass, and for this the credit seems to be substantially due to Mohammed; though here again he was not an innovator. Like previous reformers,<sup>6</sup> he vehemently denounced the horrible practice of burying alive girl children; and when the Koran became law his command took effect. His limitation of polygamy too may have counted for something, despite the unlimited practice of his latter years. For the rest, he prescribes, in the traditional eastern fashion, liberal almsgiving; this, with normal integrity and patience, and belief in "God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures, and the Prophets,"<sup>7</sup> is the gist of his ethical and religious code, with much stress on hell-fire and the joys of Paradise, and at the same time on predestination, and with no reasoning on any issue.

## § 3

The history of Saracen culture is the history of the attainment

<sup>1</sup> The alleged destruction of the library of Alexandria by Omar is probably a myth, arising out of a story of Omar's causing some Persian books to be thrown into the water. See Prof. Bury's notes in his ed. of Gibbon, v, 452-54. Cp. Oelsner, as cited, pp. 142-43.

<sup>2</sup> Sura, vi, 25, 29; xix, 67; xxvii, 68-70; liv, 2; lxxxiii, 10-13. According to lviii, 28, however, some polytheists denied the future state.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Renan, *Études d'histoire et de critique*, pp. 232-34.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, as cited, p. 232.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 235. Renan and Sprenger conflict on this point, the former having regard, apparently, to the bulk of the poetry, the latter to parts of it.

<sup>6</sup> Sedillot, p. 39. One of these was Zaid. Nicholson, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> See the passage (Sura ii) cited with praise by the sympathetic Mr. Bosworth Smith in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. p. 181; where also delighted praise is given to the "description of Infidelity" in Sura xxiv, 39-40. The "infidels" in question were simply non-Moslems.



of saner ideas and a higher plane of thought. Within a century of the Hej'ra<sup>1</sup> there had arisen some rational skepticism in the Moslem schools, as apart from the chronic schisms and strifes of the faithful. A school of theology had been founded by Hasan-al-Basri at Bassorah; and one of his disciples, Wasil ibn Attā, following some previous heretics—Mabad al Jhoni, Ghailan of Damascus, and Jonas al Aswari<sup>2</sup>—rejected the predestination doctrine of the Koran as inconsistent with the future judgment; arguing for free-will and at the same time for the humane provision of a purgatory. From this beginning dates the Motazileh or class of Motazilites (or Mu'tazilites),<sup>3</sup> the philosophic reformers and moderate free-thinkers of Islam. Other sects of a semi-political character had arisen even during the last illness of the Prophet, and others soon after his death.<sup>4</sup> One party sought to impose on the faithful the "Sunna" or "traditions," which really represented the old Arabian ideas of law, but were pretended to be unwritten sayings of Mohammed.<sup>5</sup> To this the party of Ali (the Prophet's cousin) objected; whence began the long dispute between the Shiah or Shiites (the anti-traditionists), and the Sunnites; the conquered and oppressed Persians tending to stand with the former, and generally, in virtue of their own thought, to supply the heterodox element under the later Khalifates.<sup>6</sup> Thus Shiites were apt to be Motazilites.<sup>7</sup> On Ali's side, again, there broke away a great body of Kharejites or Separatists, who claimed that the Imaum or head of the Faith should be chosen by election, while the Shiites stood for succession by divine right.<sup>8</sup> All this had occurred before any schools of theology existed.

The Motazilites, once started, divided gradually into a score of sects,<sup>9</sup> all more or less given to rationalizing within the limits of monotheism.<sup>10</sup> The first stock were named *Kadarites*, because insisting on man's power (*kadar*) over his acts.<sup>11</sup> Against them were

<sup>1</sup> The Flight (of the Prophet to Medina from Mecca, in 622), from which begins the Mohammedan era. <sup>2</sup> Sale, as cited, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 261-64; Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Musulmans*, 1878, pp. 48-55; H. Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten, oder die Freidenker im Islam*, 1865, pp. 49-50; Guyard, p. 36; Sale, p. 161 (sec. viii); Nicholson, p. 222 sq. The term Motazila broadly means "dissenter," or "belonging to a sect."

<sup>4</sup> Steiner, p. 1. <sup>5</sup> Palmer, *Introd. to Haroun Alraschid*, p. 14. <sup>6</sup> As to the Persian influence on Arab thought, cp. A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 469; Palmer, as last cited; Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 114 ff.; Nicholson, p. 220; Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, p. 43. Van Vloten's treatise is a lucid sketch of the socio-political conditions set up in Persia by the Arab conquest. <sup>7</sup> Weil, ii, 261. <sup>8</sup> G. Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Musulmans*, p. 44; Sale, pp. 161, 174-78.

<sup>9</sup> Dugat, p. 55; Steiner, p. 4; Sale, p. 162. <sup>10</sup> "Motazilism represents in Islam a Protestantism of the shade of Schleiermacher" (Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, 3e ed. p. 104). Cp. Syed Ameer Ali, *Crit. Exam. of Life of Mohammed*, pp. 300-308; Sale, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Dugat, pp. 28, 44; Guyard, p. 36; Steiner, pp. 24-25; Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. The *Kadarites*, as Sale notes (pp. 164-65), are really an older group than the Motazilites.

promptly ranged the *Jabarites*, who affirmed that man's will was wholly under divine constraint (*jabar*).<sup>1</sup> Yet another sect, the *Sifatites*, opposed both of the others, some of them<sup>2</sup> standing for a literal interpretation of the Koran, which is in part predestinationist, and in parts assumes freewill; while the main body of orthodox, following the text, professed to respect as insoluble mystery the contradictions they found in it.<sup>3</sup> The history of Islam in this matter is strikingly analogous to that of Christianity from the rise of the Pelagian heresy.

It is to be noted that, while the heretics in time came under Greek and other foreign influences, their criticism of the Koran was at the outset their own.<sup>4</sup> The Shiites, becoming broadly the party of the Persians, admitted in time Persian, Jewish, Gnostic, Manichæan, and other dualistic doctrines, and generally tended to interpret the Koran allegorically.<sup>5</sup> A particular school of allegorists, the Bathenians, even tended to purify the idea of deity in an agnostic direction.<sup>6</sup> All of these would appear to have ranked generically as Motazilites; and the manifold play of heretical thought gradually forced a certain habit of reasoning on the orthodox,<sup>7</sup> who as usual found their advantage in the dissidences of the dissenters. On the other hand, the Motazilites found new resources in the study and translation of Greek works, scientific and philosophical.<sup>8</sup> They were thus the prime factors, on the Arab side, in the culture-evolution which went on under the earlier of the Abasside Khalifs (750-1258). Greek literature reached them mainly through the Syrian Christians, in whose hands it had been put by the Nestorians, driven out of their scientific school at Edessa and exiled by Leo the Isaurian (716-741);<sup>9</sup> possibly also in part through the philosophers who, on being exiled from Athens by Justinian, settled for a time in Persia.<sup>10</sup> The total result was that already in the ninth century, within two hundred years of the beginning of Mohammed's preaching, the Saracens in Persia had reached not only a remarkable height of material civilization, their

so-called, their founder having rejected predestination before Wasil did. Kuenen (Hibbert Lect. p. 47) writes as if all the Motazilites were maintainers of freewill, but they varied. See Prof. Macdonald, as cited, p. 135 sq. <sup>1</sup> Sale, pp. 165, 172-73.

<sup>2</sup> For a view of the various schools of Sifatites see Sale, pp. 166-74. <sup>3</sup> Guyard, pp. 37-38; G. D. Osborn, *The Khalifs of Baghdad*, 1878, p. 134. <sup>4</sup> Steiner, p. 16. Major Osborn (work cited, p. 136) attributes their rise to the influence of Eastern Christianity, but gives no proof.

<sup>5</sup> Guyard, p. 40. Cp. Sale, p. 176; Van Vloten, p. 43. <sup>6</sup> Dugat, p. 34. Thus the orthodox sect of Hanyfites were called by one writer followers of reason, since they relied rather on their judgment than on tradition.

<sup>7</sup> Steiner, p. 5; Nicholson, p. 370. <sup>8</sup> Steiner, pp. 5, 9, 88-89; Sale, p. 161; Macdonald, p. 140. <sup>9</sup> Sedillot, *Hist. des Arabes*, p. 335; Prof. A. Müller, *Der Islam* (in Oncken's series), i, 470; Ueberweg, i, 402. <sup>10</sup> Ueberweg, p. 403; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 281.



wealth exceeding that of Byzantium, but a considerable though quasi-secret measure of scientific knowledge and rational thought,<sup>1</sup> including even some measure of pure atheism. All forms of rationalism alike were called *zendekism* by the orthodox, the name having the epithetic force of the Christian terms "infidelity" and "atheism."<sup>2</sup>

Secrecy was long imposed on the Motazilites by the orthodoxy of the Khalifs,<sup>3</sup> who as a rule atoned for many crimes and abundant breaches of the law of the Koran by a devout profession of faith. Freethinking, however, had its periods of political prosperity. Even under the Ommayade dynasty, the Khalif Al Walid Ibn Yazid (the eleventh of the race) was reputed to be of no religion, but seems to have been rather a ruffian than a rationalist.<sup>4</sup> Under the Abassides culture made much more progress. The Khalif Al Mansour, though he played a very orthodox part,<sup>5</sup> favoured the Motazilites (754-775), being generally a patron of the sciences; and under him were made the first translations from the Greek.<sup>6</sup> Despite his orthodoxy he encouraged science; and it was as insurgents and not as unbelievers that he destroyed the sect of Rewandites (a branch of the anti-Moslem Ismailites), who are said to have believed in metempsychosis.<sup>7</sup> Partly on political but partly also on religious grounds his successor Al Mahdi made war on the Ismailites, whom he regarded as atheists, and who appear to have been connected with the Motazilite "Brethren of Purity,"<sup>8</sup> destroying their books and causing others to be written against them.<sup>9</sup> They were anti-Koranites; hardly atheists; but a kind of informal rationalism approaching to atheism, and involving unbelief in the Koran and the Prophet, seems to have spread considerably, despite the

<sup>1</sup> For an orthodox account of the beginnings of freethinking (called *zendekism*) see Weil, ii, 214. Cp. p. 261; also Tabari's *Chronicle*, pt. v, ch. xcvi; and Renan, *Averroës*, p. 103. Already, among the Ommayade Khalifs, Yazid III held the Motazilite tenet of free will. Weil, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholson, pp. 372, 375. The name *zendek* (otherwise spelt *zindiq*) seems to have originally meant a Manichean. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 295; Nicholson, p. 375 and ref. Macdonald, p. 134, thinks it literally meant "initiate."

<sup>3</sup> Steiner, p. 8. An association called "Brethren of Purity" or "Sincere Brethren" seem to have carried Motazilism far, though they aimed at reconciling philosophy with orthodoxy. They were in effect the encyclopedists of Arab science. Ueberweg, i, 411; Nicholson, p. 370 sq. See Dr. F. Dieterici, *Die Naturanschauung und Naturphilosophie der Araber im 10ten Jahrhundert, aus den Schriften der lauterer Brüder*, 1861, Vorrede, p. viii, and Flügel, as there cited. Flügel dates the writings of the Brethren about 970; but the association presumably existed earlier. Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 104; and S. Lane-Poole's *Studies in a Mosque*, 1893, ch. vi, as to their performance. Prof. Macdonald is disposed to regard them as "part of the great Fatimid propaganda which honeycombed the ground everywhere under the Sunnite Abassids," but admits that the Fatimid movement is "the great mystery of Muslim history" (pp. 165-70).

<sup>4</sup> Sale, pp. 82-83, note.

<sup>5</sup> He made five pilgrimages to Mecca, and died on the last, thus attaining to sainthood.

<sup>6</sup> Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 81; Dugat, pp. 59-61; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 470; Macdonald, p. 134. In Mansour's reign was born Al Allaf, "Sheikh of the Motazilites."

<sup>7</sup> Dugat, p. 62. The Hayetians, who had Unitarian Christian leanings, also held by metempsychosis. Sale, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholson, p. 371 and refs.

<sup>9</sup> Dugat, p. 71. He persecuted *Zendeks* in general. Nicholson, pp. 373-74.

slaughter of many unbelievers by Al Mahdi. Its source seems to have been Persian aversion to the alien creed.<sup>1</sup> The great philosophic influence, again, was that of Aristotle; and though his abstract God-idea was nominally adhered to, the scientific movement promoted above all things the conception of a reign of law.<sup>2</sup> Al Hadi, the successor of Al Mahdi, persecuted much and killed many heretics; and Haroun Al Raschid (Aaron the Orthodox) menaced with death those who held the moderately rational tenet that "the Koran was created,"<sup>3</sup> as against the orthodox dogma (on all fours with the Brahmanic doctrine concerning the Veda) that it was eternal in the heavens and uncreated. One of the rationalists, Al Mozdar, accused the orthodox party of infidelity, as asserting two eternal things; and there was current among the Motazilites of his day the saying that, "had God left men to their natural liberty, the Arabians could have composed something not only equal but superior to the Koran in eloquence, method, and purity of language."<sup>4</sup>

Haroun's crimes, however, consisted little in acts of persecution. The Persian Barmekides (the family of his first Vizier, surnamed Barmek) were regarded as protectors of Motazilites;<sup>5</sup> and one of the sons, Jaafer, was even suspected of atheism, all three indeed being charged with it.<sup>6</sup> Their destruction, on other grounds, does not seem to have altered the conditions for the thinkers; but Haroun's incompetent son Emin was a devotee and persecutor. His abler brother and conqueror Al Mamoun (813-833), on the other hand, directly favoured the Motazilites, partly on political grounds, to strengthen himself with the Persian party, but also on the ground of conviction.<sup>7</sup> He even imprisoned some of the orthodox theologians who maintained that the Koran was not a created thing, though, like certain persecutors of other faiths, he had expressly declared himself in favour of persuasion as against coercion.<sup>8</sup> In one case, following usage, he inflicted a cruel torture. "His fatal error," says a recent scholar, "was that he invoked the authority of the State in matters of the intellectual and religious life."<sup>9</sup> Compared with others, certainly, he did not carry his

<sup>1</sup> Id. p. 72; Sale, pp. 184-85; Tabari's *Chronicle*, pt. v, ch. xcvi, Zotenberg's tr. 1874, iv, 447-53. Tabari notes (p. 448) that all the Moslem theologians agree in thinking *zendekism* much worse than any of the false religions, since it rejects all and denies God as well as the Prophet.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Steiner, pp. 55 sq., 66 sq.; Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* i, 405.

<sup>3</sup> Dugat, p. 76. See Sale, pp. 82-83, 162-63, as to the champions of this principle.

<sup>4</sup> Sale, p. 83; Macdonald, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Dugat, p. 79; Osborn, *The Khalifs of Baghdad*, p. 195.

<sup>6</sup> Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, p. 82. They were really theists.

<sup>7</sup> Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 215, 261, 280; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, pp. 514-15. "It was believed that he was at heart a *zindiq*," Nicholson, p. 368.

<sup>8</sup> Dugat, pp. 85-86. <sup>9</sup> Prof. Macdonald, as cited, p. 154.



coercion far, though, on being once publicly addressed as "Ameer of the Unbelievers," he caused the fanatic who said it to be put to death.<sup>1</sup> In private he was wont to conduct meetings for discussion, attended by believers and unbelievers of every shade, at which the only restriction was that the appeal must be to reason, and never to the Koran.<sup>2</sup> Concerning his personal bias, it is related that he had received from Kabul a book in old Persian, *The Eternal Reason*, which taught that reason is the only basis for religion, and that revelation cannot serve as a standing ground.<sup>3</sup> The story is interesting, but enigmatic, the origin of the book being untraceable. Whatever were his views, his coercive policy against the orthodox extremists had the usual effect of stimulating reaction on that side, and preparing the ultimate triumph of orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> The fact remains, however, that Mamoun was of all the Khalifs the greatest promoter of science<sup>5</sup> and culture; the chief encourager of the study and translation of Greek literature;<sup>6</sup> and, despite his coercion of the theologians on the dogma of the eternity of the Koran, tolerant enough to put a Christian at the head of a college at Damascus, declaring that he chose him not for his religion but for his science. In the same spirit he permitted the free circulation of the apologetic treatise of the Armenian Christian Al Kindy, in which Islam and the Koran are freely criticized. As a ruler, too, he ranks among the best of his race for clemency, justice, and decency of life, although orthodox imputations were cast on his subordinates. His successors Motasim and Wathek were of the same cast of opinion, the latter being, however, fanatical on behalf of his rationalistic view of the Koran as a created thing.<sup>7</sup>

A violent orthodox reaction set in under the worthless and Turk-ruled Khalif Motawakkel<sup>8</sup> (847-861), by whose time the Khalifate was in a state of political decadence, partly from the economic exhaustion following on its tyrannous and extortionate rule; partly from the divisive tendencies of its heterogeneous sections; partly from the corrupting tendency of all despotic power.<sup>9</sup> Despite the official restoration of orthodoxy, the private cultivation of science

<sup>1</sup> Dugat, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholson, pp. 358-59. He it was who first caused to be measured a degree of the earth's surface. The attempt was duly denounced as atheistic by a leading theologian, Takyuddin. Montucla, *Hist. des Mathématiques*, éd. Lalande, i, 355 sq.; Draper, *Conflict of Religion and Science*, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> A Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 509 sq.; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 280 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dugat, pp. 105-11; Sale, p. 82. Apart from this one issue, general tolerance seems to have prevailed. Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 265.

<sup>6</sup> Dugat, p. 112; Steiner, p. 79. According to Abulfaragius, Motawakkel had the merit of leaving men free to believe what they would as to the creation of the Koran. Sale, p. 82.

<sup>9</sup> A good analysis is given by Dugat, pp. 337-48.

and philosophy proceeded for a time; the study and translation of Greek books continued;<sup>1</sup> and rationalism of a kind seems to have subsisted more or less secretly to the end. In the tenth century it is said to have reached even the unlearned; and though the Motazilites gradually drifted into a scholastic orthodoxy, downright unbelief came up alongside,<sup>2</sup> albeit secretly. Faith in Mohammed's mission and law began again to shake; and the learned disregarded its prescriptions. Mystics professed to find the way to God without the Koran. Many decided that religion was useful for regulating the people, but was not for the wise. On the other side, however, the orthodox condemned all science as leading to unbelief,<sup>3</sup> and developed an elaborate and quasi-systematic theology. It was while the scientific encyclopedists of Bassorah were amassing the knowledge which, through the Moors, renewed thought in the West, that Al Ashari built up the *Kalâm* or scholastic theology which thenceforth reigned in the Mohammedan East;<sup>4</sup> and the philosopher Al Gazzali (or Gazel), on his part, employed the ancient and modern device of turning a profession of philosophical scepticism to the account of orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup>

In the struggle between science and religion, in a politically decadent State, the latter inevitably secured the administrative power.<sup>6</sup> Under the Khalifs Motamid (d. 892) and Motadhed (d. 902) all science and philosophy were proscribed, and booksellers were put upon their oath not to sell any but orthodox books.<sup>7</sup> Thus, though philosophy and science had secretly survived, when the political end came the popular faith was in much the same state as it had been under Haroun Al Raschid. Under Islam as under all the faiths of the world, in the east as in the west, the mass of the people remained ignorant as well as poor; and the learning and skill of the scholars served only to pass on the saved treasure of Greek thought and science to the new civilization of Europe. The fact that the age of military and political decadence was that of the widest diffusion of rationalism is naturally fastened on as giving the explanation of the decline; but the inference is pure fallacy. The Bagdad Khalifate

<sup>1</sup> The whole of Aristotle, except, apparently, the *Politics*, had been translated in the time of the philosopher Avicenna (fl. 1000).

<sup>2</sup> Macdonald, pp. 200, 205-206.

<sup>3</sup> Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten*, pp. 10-11, following Gazzali (Al Gazel); Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, iii, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Guyard, pp. 41-42; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-5; Macdonald, p. 186 sq. The cultivators of *Kalâm* were called *Motacallemin*.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, i, 405, 414; Steiner, p. 11; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 193-94. Compare the laudatory account of Al Gazzali by Prof. Macdonald (pt. iii, ch. iv), who pronounces him "certainly the most sympathetic figure in the history of Islam" (p. 215).

<sup>6</sup> Hence, among other things, a check on the practice of anatomy, religious feeling being opposed to it under Islam as under Christianity. Dugat, pp. 62-63.

<sup>7</sup> Dugat, pp. 123-28.



declined as the Christianized Roman Empire declined, from political and external causes; and the Turks who overthrew it proceeded to overthrow Christian Byzantium, where rationalism never reared its head.

The conventional view is thus set forth in a popular work (*The Saracens*, by Arthur Gilman, 1887, p. 385): "Unconsciously Mamun began a process by which that implicit faith which had been at once the foundation and the inspiration of Islam, which had nerved its warriors in their terrible warfare, and had brought the nation out of its former obscurity to the foremost position among the peoples of the world, was to be taken from them." We have seen that this view is entirely erroneous as regards the rise of the Saracen power; and it is no less so as regards the decline. At the outset there had been no "implicit faith" among the conquerors. The Eastern Saracens, further, had been decisively defeated by the Byzantines in the very first flush of their fanaticism and success; and the Western had been routed by Charles Martel long before they had any philosophy. There was no overthrow of faith among the warriors of the Khalifate. The enlistment of Turkish mercenaries by Mamoun and Mutasim, by way of being independent of the Persian and Arab factions in the army and the State, introduced an element which, at first purely barbaric, became as orthodox as the men of Haroun's day had been. Yet the decadence, instead of being checked, was furthered.

Nor were the strifes set up by the rationalistic view of the Koran nearly so destructive as the mere faction-fights and sectarian insurrections which began with Motawakkel. The falling-away of cities and provinces under the feeble Moktader (908-932) had nothing whatever to do with opinions, but was strictly analogous to the dissolution of the kingdom of Charlemagne under his successors, through the rise of new provincial energies; and the tyranny of the Turkish mercenaries was on all fours with that of the Pretorians of the Roman Empire, and with that of the Janissaries in later Turkey. The writer under notice has actually recorded (p. 408) that the warlike sect of Ismailitic Karmathians, who did more than any other enemy to dismember the Khalifate, were unbelievers in the Koran, deniers of revelation, and disregards of prayer. The later Khalifs, puppets in the hands of the Turks, were one and all devout believers.

On the other hand, fresh Moslem and non-Moslem dynasties arose alternately as the conditions and opportunities determined. Jenghiz Khan, who overran Asia, was no Moslem; neither was Tamerlane; but new Moslem conquerors did overrun India, as pagan Alexander had done in his day. Theological ideas

counted for as little in one case as in the other. Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni (997-1030), who reared a new empire on the basis of the province of Khorassan and the kingdom of Bokhara, and who twelve times successfully invaded India, happened to be of Turkish stock; but he is also recorded to have been in his youth a doubter of a future state, as well as of his personal legitimacy. His later parade of piety (as to which see Baron De Slane's tr. of Ibn Khallikan's *Biog. Dict.* iii, 334) is thus a trifle suspect (*British India*, in Edin. Cab. Lib. 3rd ed. i, 189, following Ferishta); and his avarice seems to have animated him to the full as much as his faith, which was certainly not more devout than that of the Brahmans of Somnauth, whose hold he captured. (Cp. Prof. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 119.) During his reign, besides, unbelief was rife in his despite (Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, iii, 72), though he burned the books of the Motazilites, besides crucifying many Ismailian heretics (Browne, p. 160). The conventional theorem as to the political importance of faith, in short, will not bear investigation. Even Freeman here sets it aside (*Hist. and Conq. of the Saracens*, p. 124).

## § 4

It is in the later and nominally decadent ages of the Bagdad Khalifate, when science and culture and even industry relatively prospered by reason of the personal impotence of the Khalifs, that we meet with the most pronounced and the most perspicacious of the Freethinkers of Islam. In the years 973-1057 there dwelt in the little Syrian town of Marratun-Numan the blind poet ABU'L-ALA-AL-MA'ARRI, who wrote a parody of the Koran,<sup>1</sup> and in his verse derided all religions as alike absurd, and yet was for some reason never persecuted. He has been pronounced "incomparably greater" than Omar Khayyám "both as a poet and as an agnostic."<sup>2</sup> One of his sayings was that "The world holds two classes of men—intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence."<sup>3</sup> He may have escaped on the strength of a character for general eccentricity, for he was an ardent vegetarian and an opponent of all parentage, declaring that to bring a child into the world was to add to the sum of suffering.<sup>4</sup> The fact that he was latterly a man of wealth, yet in person an ascetic and a generous giver, may be the true explanation. Whatever be the explanation

<sup>1</sup> Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, ii (1906), 290, 293; R. A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, 1907, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Browne, as cited, p. 292. Cp. Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, 1875-77, ii, 386-95; Macdonald, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Dugat, p. 167; Weil, iii, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Dugat, pp. 164-68.



of his immunity, the frankness of his heterodoxy is memorable. Nourished perhaps by a temper of protest set up in him by the blindness which fell upon him in childhood after smallpox, the spirit of reason seems to have been effectually developed in him by a stay of a year and a-half at Bagdad, where, in the days of Al Mansour, "Christians and Jews, Buddhists and Zoroastrians, Sabians and Sufis, materialists and rationalists," met and communed.<sup>1</sup> Before his visit, his poems are substantially orthodox; later, their burden changes. He denies a resurrection, and is "wholly incredulous of any divine revelation. Religion, as he conceives it, is a product of the human mind, in which men believe through force of habit and education, never stopping to consider whether it is true." "His belief in God amounted, as it would seem, to little beyond a conviction that all things are governed by inexorable Fate." Concerning creeds he sings in one stave:—

Now this religion happens to prevail  
Until by that one it is overthrown;  
Because men will not live with men alone,  
But always with another fairy-tale<sup>2</sup>—

a summing-up not to be improved upon here.

A century later still, and in another region, we come upon the (now) most famous of all Eastern freethinkers, OMAR KHAYYÁM. He belonged to Naishápúr in Khorassan, a province which had long been known for its rationalism,<sup>3</sup> and which had been part of the nucleus of the great Asiatic kingdom created by Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni at the beginning of the eleventh century, soon after the rise of the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt. Under that Sultan flourished Ferdusi (Firdausi), one of the chief glories of Persian verse. After Mahmoud's death, his realm and parts of the Khalifate in turn were overrun by the Seljuk Turks under Togrul Beg; under whose grandson Malik it was that Omar Khayyám, astronomer and poet, studied and sang in Khorassan. The Turk-descended Shah favoured science as strongly as any of the Abassides; and when he decided to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight experts he employed to do it. Thus was set up for the East the Jaláli calendar, which, as Gibbon has noted,<sup>4</sup> "surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." Omar was, in fact, one of the ablest mathematicians of his age.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nicholson, pp. 314-15.

<sup>2</sup> *The Diwan of Abu'l-Ala*, by Henry Baerlein, 1908, st. 36. Cp. 1, 37, 41, 42, 53, 81, 86, 94, and the extracts given by Nicholson, pp. 316-23. <sup>3</sup> Weil, II, 215.

<sup>4</sup> *Decline and Fall*, ch. lvii. Bohn ed. vi, 392, and note. Cp. E. H. Whinfield, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyám*, 1882, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> See the preface to Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát*.

His name, Omar ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyámi, seems to point to Arab descent. "Al-Khayyámmi" means "the tent-maker"; but in no biographic account of him is there the slightest proof that he or his father ever belonged to that or any other handicraft.<sup>1</sup> Always he figures as a scholar and a man of science. Since, therefore, the patronymic al-Khayyámi is fairly common now among Arabs, and also among the still nomadic tribes of Khuzistan and Luristan, the reasonable presumption is that it was in his case a patronymic also.<sup>2</sup> His father being a man of some substance, he had a good schooling, and is even described in literary tradition as having become an expert Koran scholar, by the admission of the orthodox Al Gazzali, who, however, is represented in another record as looking with aversion on Omar's scientific lore.<sup>3</sup> The poet may have had his lead to freethought during his travels after graduating at Naishapur, when he visited Samarkhand, Bokhara, Ispahan, and Balk.<sup>4</sup> He seems to have practised astrology for a living, even as did Kepler in Europe five hundred years later; and he perhaps dabbled somewhat in medicine.<sup>5</sup> A hostile orthodox account of him, written in the thirteenth century, represents him as "versed in all the wisdom of the Greeks," and as wont to insist on the necessity of studying science on Greek lines.<sup>6</sup> Of his prose works, two, which were of standard authority, dealt respectively with precious stones and climatology.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond question the poet-astronomer was undevout; and his astronomy doubtless helped to make him so. One contemporary writes: "I did not observe that he had any great belief in astrological predictions; nor have I seen or heard of any of the great (scientists) who had such belief."<sup>8</sup> The biographical sketch by Ibn al Kifti, before cited, declares that he "performed pilgrimages not from piety but from fear," having reason to dread the hostility of contemporaries who knew or divined his unbelief; and there is a story of a treacherous pupil who sought to bring him into public odium.<sup>9</sup> In point of fact he was not, any more than Abu'l-Ala, a convinced atheist, but he had no sympathy with popular religion. "He gave his adherence to no religious sect. Agnosticism, not faith, is the keynote of his works."<sup>10</sup> Among the sects he saw everywhere strife and hatred in which he could have no part. His earlier English translators, reflecting the tone of the first half

<sup>1</sup> In one quatrain, of doubtful authenticity, is the line "Khayyám, who longtime stitched the tents of learning" (Whinfield, xxxviii), which excludes the idea of literal handicraft.

<sup>2</sup> J. K. M. Shirazi, *Life of Omar Al-Khayyámi*, ed. 1895, pp. 30-41.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 51, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 62-63.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* pp. 59-61.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* pp. 69-76, 86-88.



of the last century, have thought fit to moralize censoriously over his attitude to life; and the first, Prof. Cowell, has austere decided that Omar's gaiety is "but a *risus sardonicus* of despair."<sup>1</sup> Even the subtler Fitzgerald, who has so admirably rendered some of the audacities which Cowell thought "better left in the original Persian," has the air of apologizing for them when he partly concurs in the same estimate. But despair is not the name for the humorous melancholy which Omar, like Abu' l-Ala, weaves around his thoughts on the riddle of the universe. Like Abu' l-Ala, again, he talks at times of God, but with small signs of faith. In epigrams which have seldom been surpassed for their echoing depth, he disposes of the theistic solution and the lore of immortality; whereafter, instead of offering another shibboleth, he sings of wine and roses, of the joys of life and of their speedy passage; not forgetting to add a stipulation for beneficence.<sup>2</sup> It was his way of turning into music the undertone of all mortality; and that it is now preferable, for any refined intelligence, to the affectation of zest for a "hereafter" on which no one wants to enter, would seem to be proved by the remarkable vogue he has secured in modern England, chiefly through the incomparable version of Fitzgerald. Much of the attraction, certainly, is due to the canorous cadence and felicitous phrasing of those singularly fortunate stanzas; and a similar handling might have won as high a repute among us for Abu' l-Ala, whom, as we have seen, some of our Orientalists set higher, and whose verse as recently rendered into English has an indubitable charm. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, has added much to Omar. But the thoughts of Omar remain the kernels of Fitzgerald's verses; and whereas the counsel, "Gather ye roses while ye may," is common enough, it must be the weightier bearing of his deeper and more daring ideas that gives the quatrains their main hold to-day. In the more exact rendering of those translators who closely reproduce the original he remains beyond question a freethinker,<sup>3</sup> placing ethic above creed, though much given to the praise of wine. Never

<sup>1</sup> Cited in introd. to Dole's variorum ed. of the *Rubáiyát*, 1896, i, p. xix. Cp. Macdonald, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> "Dost thou desire to taste eternal bliss?  
Vex thine own heart, but never vex another." (Whinfield, vi.)  
"Seek not the Kaaba, rather seek a heart." (*Id.* vii.)

This note is often repeated. *E.g.* xxxii, li.

<sup>3</sup> See in the very competent translation of Mrs. H. M. Cadell (who remarked that "Fitzgerald has rather written a poem upon Omar than translated him"), quatrains 12, 14, 15, 20, 28, 29, 42, 45, 48, 51d, 85, 88b, 133, 141, 143, etc.; in the artistically turned version of Mr. A. H. Talbot, which follows very faithfully the literal prose translation of Mr. Heron-Allen, Nos. 1, 3, 15, 18, 19, 24, 33, 41, 45, 59, 72, 91, 115, 123, 148; and in Whinfield's version, Nos. 10, 25, 32, 41, 45, 46, 62, 68, 77, 84, 87, 104, 105, 111, 113, 118, 142, 144, 148, 151, 157, 161, 179, 195, 200, 201, 203, 216.

popular in the Moslem world,<sup>1</sup> he has had in ours an unparalleled welcome; and it must be because from his scientific vantage ground in the East, in the period of the Norman Conquest, he had attained in some degree the vision and chimed with the mood of a later and larger age.

That Omar in his day and place was not alone in his mood lies on the face of his verse. Many quatrains ascribed to him, indeed, are admittedly assignable to other Persian poets; and one of his English editors notes that "the poetry of rebellion and revolt from orthodox opinion, which is supposed to be peculiar to him, may be traced in the works of his predecessor Avicenna, as well as in those of Afdal-i-Káshí, and others of his successors."<sup>2</sup> The allusions to the tavern, a thing suspect and illicit for Islam, show that he was in a society more Persian than Arab, one in which was to be found nearly all of the free intellectual life possible in the Moslem East;<sup>3</sup> and doubtless Persian thought, always leaning to heresy, and charged with germs of scientific speculation from immemorial antiquity, prepared his rationalism; though his monism excludes alike dualism and theism. "One for two I never did misread" is his summing up of his philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

But the same formula might serve for the philosophy of the sect of Sufis,<sup>5</sup> who in all ages seem to have included unbelievers as well as devoutly mystical pantheists. Founded, it is said, by a woman, Rabia, in the first century of the Hej'ra,<sup>6</sup> the sect really carries on a pre-Mohammedan mysticism, and may as well derive from Greece<sup>7</sup> as from Asia. Its original doctrine of divine love, as a reaction against Moslem austerity, gave it a fixed hold in Persia, and became the starting point of innumerable heterodox doctrines.<sup>8</sup> Under the Khalif Moktader, a Persian Sufi is recorded to have been tortured and executed for teaching that every man is God.<sup>9</sup> In later ages, Sufism became loosely associated with every species of

<sup>1</sup> Shirazi, pp. 102-108. Early in the thirteenth century he was denounced by a Sufi mystic as an "unhappy philosopher, atheist, and materialist." Browne, *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, 250. Abu' l-Ala, of course, was similarly denounced.

<sup>2</sup> Whinfield, cited by Browne, pp. 109-110.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mrs. Cadell, *The Rub'iyat of Omar Khayam*, 1899. Garnett's introd. pp. xvii xviii-xxi, xxiv, and Shirazi, as cited, pp. 79-80.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzgerald's pref. 4th ed. p. xiii; Whinfield, No. 147. Cp. quatrains cited in art. Sufism, in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. pp. 325-26.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Whinfield, p. 86, note on No. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Guyard, as cited, p. 42. But cp. Ueberweg, i, 411; Nicholson, pp. 233-34.

<sup>7</sup> It is not impossible, Max Müller notwithstanding, that the name may have come originally from the Greek *sophoi*, "the wise," though it is usually connected with *sufi*=the woollen robe worn by the Sufite. There are other etymologies. Cp. Fraser, *Histor. and Descrip. Account of Persia*, 1834, p. 323, note; Dugat, p. 326; and art. Sufism in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. p. 315. On the Sufi system in general see also Max Müller, *Psychol. Relig. Lect.* vi.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 293, as to Sufi latitudinarianism.

<sup>9</sup> Guyard, p. 44; *Relig. Systems*, p. 319.



independent thinking; and there is reason to suspect that the later poets SADI (fl. thirteenth century) and HAFIZ<sup>1</sup> (fl. fourteenth century), as well as hundreds of lesser status, held under the name of Sufism views of life not far removed from those of Omar Khayyám; who, however, had bantered the Sufis so unmercifully that they are said to have dreaded and hated him.<sup>2</sup> In any case, Sufism has included such divergent types as Al Gazzali,<sup>3</sup> the skeptical defender of the faith; devout pantheistic poets such as Jâmi;<sup>4</sup> and singers of love and wine such as Hafiz, whose extremely concrete imagery is certainly not as often allegorical as serious Sufis assert, though no doubt it is sometimes so.<sup>5</sup> It even became nominally associated with the destructive Ismailitism of the sect of the Assassins, whose founder, Hassan, had been the schoolfellow of Omar Khayyám.<sup>6</sup>

Of Sufism as a whole it may be said that whether as inculcating quietism, or as widening the narrow theism of Islam into pantheism, or as sheltering an unaggressive rationalism, it has made for freedom and humanity in the Mohammedan world, lessening the evils of ignorance where it could not inspire progress.<sup>7</sup> It long anticipated the semi-rationalism of those Christians who declare heaven and hell to be names for bodily or mental states in this life.<sup>8</sup> On its more philosophic side too it connects with the long movement of speculation which, passing into European life through the Western Saracens, revived Greek philosophic thought in Christendom after the night of the Middle Ages, at the same time that Saracen science passed on the more precious seeds of real knowledge to the new civilization.

### § 5

There is the less need to deal at any length in these pages with the professed philosophy of the eastern Arabs, seeing that it was from first to last but little associated with any direct or practical repudiation of dogma and superstition.<sup>9</sup> What freethought there

<sup>1</sup> Hafiz in his own day was reckoned impious by many. Cp. Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, 1827, ii, 100.

<sup>2</sup> Yet he was disposed to put to death those who claimed mystic intercourse with Deity. Sale, pp. 177-78.

<sup>3</sup> Whose *Salaman and Absal*, tr. by Fitzgerald, is so little noticed in comparison with the *Rubâiyât* of Omar.

<sup>4</sup> E. C. Browne, in *Religious Systems*, as cited, p. 321; Dugat, p. 331.

<sup>5</sup> Shirazi, pp. 22-23; Fitzgerald's pref. following Mirkhond; Fraser, *Persia*, p. 329.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Dugat, p. 336; Syed Ameer Ali, pp. 311-15; Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit. p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> Sale, p. 176. The same doctrine is fairly ancient in India. (Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v, 313, note.) A belief that hell-fire will not be eternal was held among the Motazilite sect of Jâhedhians. Sale, p. 164. The Thamamians, again, held that at the resurrection all infidels, idolaters, atheists, Jews, Christians, Magians, and heretics, shall be reduced to dust. *Id. ib.*

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. Cp. p. 172.

was had only an unwritten currency, and is to be traced, as so often happens in later European history, through the protests of orthodox apologists. Thus the Persian Al Gazzali, in the preface to his work, *The Destruction of the Philosophers*, declares of the subjects of his attack that "the source of all their errors is the trust they have in the names of Sokrates, Hippokrates, Plato, and Aristotle; the admiration they profess for their genius and subtlety; and the belief, finally, that those great masters have been led by the profundity of their faculty to reject all religion, and to regard its precepts as the product of artifice and imposture."<sup>1</sup> This implies an abundant rationalism,<sup>2</sup> but, as always, the unwritten unbelief lost ground, its non-publication being the proof that orthodoxy prevailed against it. Movements which were originally liberal, such as that of the Motecallemin, ran at length to mere dialectic defence of the faith against the philosophers. Fighting the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter, they sought to found a new theistic creationism on the atoms of Demokritos, making God the creator of the atoms, and negating the idea of natural law.<sup>3</sup> Eastern Moslem philosophy in general followed some such line of reaction and petrification. The rationalistic AL KINDI (fl. 850) seems to have been led to philosophize by the Motazilite problems; but his successors mostly set them aside, developing an abstract logic and philosophy on Greek bases, or studying science for its own sake, though as a rule professing a devout acceptance of the Koran.<sup>4</sup> Such was AVICENNA (Ibn Sina: d. 1037), who taught that men should revere the faith in which they were educated; though in comparison with his predecessor Al Farabi, who leant to Platonic mysticism, he is a rationalistic Aristotelian,<sup>5</sup> with a strong leaning to pantheism. Of him an Arabic historian writes that in his old age he attached himself to the court of the heretical Ala-ud-Dawla at Ispahan, in order that he might freely write his own heretical works.<sup>6</sup> After Al Gazzali (d. 1111), who attacked both Avicenna<sup>7</sup> and Al Farabi somewhat in the spirit of Cicero's skeptical Cotta attacking the Stoics and the Epicureans,<sup>8</sup> there seems to have been a further development of skepticism, the skeptical defence of

<sup>1</sup> Renan's tr. in *Averroès*, p. 166. The wording of the last phrase suggests a misconception.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-107.

<sup>4</sup> Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, i, 412; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 44, 96.

<sup>6</sup> E. G. Browne, *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, ii, 107.

<sup>7</sup> Whom he pronounced a pagan and an infidel. Hauréau, II, i, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 57, 96-98; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd. ed. i, 193. Renan, following Degenerando (cp. Whewell, as cited), credits Gazzali with anticipating Hume's criticism of the idea of causation; but Gazzali's position is that of dogmatic theism, not of naturalism. See Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.* 4th ed. ii, 57.



the faith having the same unsettling tendency in his as in later hands. Ibn Khaldun seems to denounce in the name of faith his mixture of pietism and philosophy; and Makrisi speaks of his doctrines as working great harm to religion<sup>1</sup> among the Moslems. But the socio-political conditions were too unpropitious to permit of any continuous advance on rational lines. Ere long an uncritical orthodoxy prevailed in the Eastern schools, and it is in Moorish Spain that we are to look for the last efforts of Arab philosophy.

The course of culture-evolution there broadly corresponds with that of the Saracen civilization in the East. In Spain the Moors came into contact with the Roman imperial polity, and at the same time with the different culture elements of Judaism and Christianity. To both of these faiths they gave complete toleration, thus strengthening their own in a way that no other policy could have availed to do. Whatever was left of Græco-Roman art, handicraft, and science, saving the arts of portraiture, they encouraged; and whatever of agricultural science remained from Carthaginian times they zealously adopted and improved. Like their fellow-Moslems in the East, they further learned all the science that the preserved literature of Greece could give them. The result was that under energetic and enlightened khalifs the Moorish civilization became the centre of light and knowledge as well as of material prosperity for medieval Europe. Whatever of science the world possessed was to be found in their schools; and thither in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries flocked students from the Christian States of western and northern Europe. It was in whole or in part from Saracen hands that the modern world received astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, botany, jurisprudence, and philosophy. They were, in fact, the revivers of civilization after the age of barbarian Christianity.<sup>2</sup> And while the preservation of Greek science, lost from the hands of Christendom, would have been a notable service enough, the Arabs did much more. Alhazen (d. 1038) is said to have done the most original work in optics before Newton,<sup>3</sup> and in the same century Arab medicine and chemistry made original advances.<sup>4</sup>

While the progressive period lasted, there was of course an

<sup>1</sup> Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie II, i, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Seignobos, *Hist. de la Civ.* ii, 58; Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, pref.; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 108-18; U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, i, ch. 16; Baden Powell, as cited, pp. 94-104; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 185-89; and post, ch. x.

<sup>3</sup> Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 97; Whewell, *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. ii, 273-74.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. L. Leclerc, *Hist. de la Médecine Arabe*, 1876, i, 462; Dr. E. von Meyer, *Hist. of Chemistry*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. p. 28.

abundance of practical freethought. But after a marvellously rapid rise, the Moorish civilization was arrested and paralysed by the internal and the external forces of anti-civilization—religious fanaticism within and Christian hostility without. Everywhere we have seen culture-progress depending more or less clearly on the failure to find solutions for political problems. The most fatal defect of all Arab civilization—a defect involved in its first departure by way of conquest, and in its fixedly hostile relation to the Christian States, which kept it constantly on a military basis—was the total failure to substitute any measure of constitutional rule for despotism. It was thus politically unprogressive, even while advancing in other respects. But in other respects also it soon reached the limits set by the conditions.

Whereas in Persia the Arabs overran an ancient civilization, containing many elements of rationalism which acted upon their own creed, the Moors in Spain found a population only slightly civilized, and predisposed by its recent culture, as well as by its natural conditions,<sup>1</sup> to fanatical piety. Thus when, under their tolerant rule, Jews and Christians in large numbers embraced Islam, the new converts became the most fanatical of all.<sup>2</sup> All rationalism existed in their despite, and, abounding as they did, they tended to gain power whenever the Khalif was weak, and to rebel furiously when he was hostile. When, accordingly, the growing pressure of the feudal Christian power in Northern Spain at length became a menacing danger to the Moorish States, weakened by endless intestine strife, the one resource was to call in a new force of Moslem fanaticism in the shape of the Almoravide<sup>3</sup> Berbers, who, to the utmost of their power, put down everything scientific and rationalistic, and established a rigid Koranolatry. After a time they in turn, growing degenerate while remaining orthodox, were overrun by a new influx of conquering fanatics from Africa, the Almohades, who, failing to add political science to their faith, went down in the thirteenth century before the Christians in Spain, in a great battle in which their prince sat in their sight with the Koran in his hand.<sup>4</sup> Here there could be no pretence that "unbelief" wrought the downfall. The Jonah of freethought, so to speak, had been thrown overboard; and the ship went down with the flag of faith flying at every masthead.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in England*, 1-vol. ed. p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Properly Morabethin=men of God or of religion; otherwise known as "Marabouts."

<sup>4</sup> Sedillot, p. 298.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Dozy, *Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne*, iii, 248-86; Ueberweg, i, 415.



It was in the last centuries of Moorish rule that there lived the philosophers whose names connect it with the history of European thought, retaining thus a somewhat factitious distinction as compared with the men of science, many of them nameless, who developed and transmitted the sciences. The pantheistic AVEMPACE (Ibn Badja: d. 1138), who defended the reason against the theistic skepticism of Al Gazzali,<sup>1</sup> was physician, astronomer, and mathematician, as well as metaphysician; as was ABUBACER (Abu Bekr, also known as Ibn Tophail: d. 1185), who regarded religious systems as "only a necessary means of discipline for the multitude,"<sup>2</sup> and as being merely symbols of the higher truth reached by the philosopher. Both men, however, tended rather to mysticism than to exact thought; and Abubacer's treatise, *The Self-taught Philosopher*, which has been translated into Latin (by Pococke in 1671), English, Dutch, and German, has had the singular fortune of being adopted by the Quakers as a work of edification.<sup>3</sup>

Very different was the part played by AVERROËS (Ibn Roshd), the most famous of all Moslem thinkers, because the most far-reaching in his influence on European thought. For the Middle Ages he was pre-eminently the expounder of Aristotle, and it is as setting forth, in that capacity, the pantheistic doctrine which affirms the eternity of the material universe and makes the individual soul emanate from and return to the soul of all, that he becomes important alike in Moslem and Christian thought. Diverging from the asceticism and mysticism of Avempace and Abubacer, and strenuously opposing the anti-rationalism of Al Gazzali, against whose chief treatise he penned his own *Destruction of the Destruction of the Philosophers*, Averroës is the least mystical and the most rational of the Arab thinkers.<sup>4</sup> At nearly all vital points he oppugns the religious view of things, denying bodily resurrection, which he treats (here following all his predecessors in heretical Arab philosophy) as a vulgar fable;<sup>5</sup> and making some approach to a scientific treatment of the problem of "Freewill" as against, on the one hand, the ethic-destroying doctrine of the Motecallemin, who made God's will the sole standard of right, and affirmed predestination (Jabarism); and against, on the other hand, the anti-determinism of the Kadarites.<sup>6</sup> Even in his politics he was original; and in his paraphrase of Plato's *Republic* he has said a notable word for women, pointing out how small an opening is offered for their

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 156-58.

<sup>4</sup> Ueberweg, i, 415; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 32, 99.

<sup>5</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 159-60.

faculties in Moslem society.<sup>1</sup> Of all tyrannies, he boldly declared, the worst is that of priests.

In time, however, a consciousness of the vital hostility of his doctrine to current creeds, and of the danger he consequently ran, made him, like so many of his later disciples, anxious to preserve priestly favour. As regards religion he was more complaisant than Abubacer, pronouncing Mohammedanism the most perfect of all popular systems,<sup>2</sup> and preaching a patriotic conformity on that score to philosophic students.

From him derives the formula of a two-fold truth—one truth for science or philosophy, and another for religion—which played so large a part in the academic life of Christendom for centuries.<sup>3</sup> In two of his treatises, *On the harmony of religion with philosophy* and *On the demonstration of religious dogmas*, he even takes up a conservative attitude, proclaiming that the wise man never utters a word against the established creed, and going so far as to say that the freethinker who attacks it, inasmuch as he undermines popular virtue, deserves death.<sup>4</sup> Even in rebutting, as entirely absurd, the doctrine of the creation of the world, and ascribing its currency to the stupefying power of habit, he takes occasion to remark piously that those whose religion has no better basis than faith are frequently seen, on taking up scientific studies, to become utter *zendéks*.<sup>5</sup> But he lived in an age of declining culture and reviving fanaticism; and all his conformities could not save him from proscription, at the hands of a Khalif who had long favoured him, for the offence of cultivating Greek antiquity to the prejudice of Islam. All study of Greek philosophy was proscribed at the same time, and all books found on the subject were destroyed.<sup>6</sup> Disgraced and banished from court, Averroës died at Morocco in 1198; other philosophers were similarly persecuted;<sup>7</sup> and soon afterwards the Moorish rule in Spain came to an end in the odour of sanctity.<sup>8</sup>

So complete was now the defeat of the intellectual life in Western Islam that the ablest writer produced by the Arab race in the period of the Renaissance, Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406), writes as a bigoted believer in revelation, though his writings on the science of history were the most philosophic since the classic

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 160-62.

<sup>2</sup> Ueberweg, i, 416; Steiner, p. 6; Renan, *Averroës*, p. 162 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Ueberweg, i, 460; Renan, pp. 258, 275.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 169, and references.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 5. Cp. the *Avertissement*, p. iii.

<sup>6</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 31-36. Renan surmises that the popular hostility to the philosophers, which was very marked, was largely due to the element of the conquered Christians, who were noted for their neglect of astronomy and natural science.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Ueberweg, i, 415-17.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* pp. 165-66.



period, being out of all comparison superior to those of the Christian chroniclers of his age.<sup>1</sup> So rationalistic, indeed, is his method, relatively to his time, that it is permissible to suspect him of seeking to propitiate the bigots.<sup>2</sup> But neither they nor his race in general could learn the sociological lessons he had it in him to teach. Their development was arrested for that period.

## § 6

Of later freethought under Islam there is little to record as regards literary output, but the phenomenon has never disappeared. Buckle, in his haste, declared that he could write the history of Turkish civilization on the back of his hand;<sup>3</sup> but even in Turkey, at a time of minimum friendly contact with other European life, there have been traces of a spirit of freethinking nearly as active as that astir in Christendom at the same period. Thus at the end of the seventeenth century we have circumstantial testimony to the vogue of a doctrine of atheistic Naturalism at Constantinople. The holders of this doctrine were called *Muserin*, a term said to mean "The true secret is with us." They affirmed a creative and all-sustaining Nature, in which Man has his place like the plants and like the planets; and they were said to form a very large number, including Cadis and other learned as well as some renegade persons.<sup>4</sup> But Turkish culture-conditions in the eighteenth century were not such as to permit of intellectual progress on native lines; and to this day rationalism in that as in other Moslem countries is mainly a matter of reflex action set up by the impact of European scientific knowledge, or social contact. There is no modern rationalistic literature.

Motazilism, so-called, is still heard of in Arabia itself.<sup>5</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, indeed, it is little in evidence, standing now as it does for a species of broad-church liberalism, analogous to Christian Unitarianism;<sup>6</sup> but in Persia the ancient leaning to rationalism is still common. The old-world pantheism which we have seen conserved in Omar Khayyám gave rise in later centuries to similar developments among the Parsees both in Persia and in India; and from the sixteenth century onwards there are clear traces among

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, ed. 1893, vol. i, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Flint, p. 129, as to their hostility to him.

<sup>3</sup> Huth, *Life and Writings of Buckle*, ii, 171.

<sup>4</sup> Ricaut, *Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 1696, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> Dugat, p. 59. The Ameer Ali Syed, Moulvi, M.A., LL.B., whose *Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed* appeared in 1873, writes as a Motazilite of a moderate type.

<sup>6</sup> Macdonald, pp. 120, 196, 286.

them of a number of rationalizing heresies, varying from pantheism and simple deism to atheism and materialism.<sup>1</sup> In Persia to-day there are many thinkers of these casts of thought.<sup>2</sup> About 1830 a British traveller estimated that, assuming there were between 200,000 and 300,000 Sufis in the country, those figures probably fell greatly short of the number "secretly inclined to infidelity."<sup>3</sup> Whatever be the value of the figures, the statement is substantially confirmed by later observers;<sup>4</sup> missionaries reporting independently that in Persia "most of the higher class, of the nobility, and of the learned professions.....are at heart infidels or sceptics."<sup>5</sup> Persian freethought is of course, in large part, the freethought of ignorance, and seems to co-exist with astrological superstition;<sup>6</sup> but there is obviously needed only science, culture, and material development to produce, on such a basis, a renaissance as remarkable as that of modern Japan.

The verdict of Vambéry is noteworthy: "In all Asia, with the exception of China, there is no land and no people wherein there is so little of religious enthusiasm as in Persia; where freethinkers are so little persecuted, and can express their opinions with so little disturbance; and where, finally, as a natural consequence, the old religious structure can be so easily shattered by the outbreak of new enthusiasts. Whoever has read Khayyám's blasphemies against God and the prophet, his jesting verses against the holiest ceremonies and commandments of Islam; and whoever knows the vogue of this book and other works directed against the current religion, will not wonder that Báb with the weapon of the Word won so many hearts in so short a time."<sup>7</sup>

The view that Bábism affiliates to rationalism is to be understood in the sense that the atmosphere of the latter made possible the growth of the former, its adherents being apparently drawn rather from the former orthodox.<sup>8</sup> The young founder of the sect, Mirza-

<sup>1</sup> A. Franck, *Études Orientales*, 1861, pp. 241-48, citing the *Dabistan*.

<sup>2</sup> Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit. ch. v; J. K. M. Shirazi, *Life of Omar Khayyám*, ed. 1905, p. 102. The latter writer notes, however, that "the cultured classes, who ought to know better, are at no pains to dissipate the existing religious prejudice against one [Omar] of whose reputation every Persian may well feel proud." "At the present time.....the name of Omar is no less execrated by the Shi-ite mob in Persia than it was in his own day." *Id.* p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, *Persia*, p. 330. This writer (p. 239) describes Sufism as "the superstition of the freethinker," and as "often assumed as a cloak to cover entire infidelity."

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Dr. Wills, *The Land of the Lion and the Sun*, ed. 1891, p. 339.

<sup>5</sup> Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, 1834, p. 340. Cp. Rev. H. Southgate, *Tour through Armenia*, etc. 1840, ii, 153; and Morier's *Hadjí Baba of Ispahan* (1824), ch. xlvii, near end.

<sup>6</sup> Fraser, *Persia*, p. 331; Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, ii, 106; Gobineau, as cited, ch. v.

<sup>7</sup> H. Vambéry, *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 1875, pp. 32-33. Vambéry further remarks: "The half-fanatical, half-freethinking tone of Persians has often surprised me in my controversies with the most zealous Schiites."

<sup>8</sup> As to the rise of this sect see Gobineau, as cited, pp. 141-353; E. G. Browne's *The Episode of the Báb*; and his lecture on Bábism in *Religious Systems of the World*. Cp. Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 378-81.



Ali-Mohammed, declared himself "The Báb," i.e. "the Gate" (to the knowledge of God), as against the orthodox Moslem teachers who taught that "since the twelve Imāms, the Gate of Knowledge is closed." Hence the name of the sect. Mirza-Ali, who showed a strong tendency to intolerance, quickly created an aggressive movement, which was for a time put down by the killing of himself and many of his followers.

Since his execution the sect has greatly multiplied and its doctrines have much widened. For a time the founder's intolerant teachings were upheld by Ezél, the founder of one of the two divisions into which the party speedily fell; while his rival Béha, who gave himself out as the true Prophet, of whom the Báb was merely the precursor, developed a notably cosmopolitan and equalitarian doctrine, including a vague belief in immortality, without heaven, hell, or purgatory. Ezél eventually abandoned his claims, and his followers now number less than two thousand; while the Béhaïtes number nearly three millions out of the seven millions of the Persian population, and some two millions in the adjacent countries. The son of Béha, Abbas Effendi, who bears the title of "The Great Branch," now rules the cult, which promises to be the future religion of Persia.<sup>1</sup> One of the most notable phenomena of the earlier movement was the entrance of a young woman, daughter of a leading ulema, who for the first time in Moslem history threw off the regulation veil and preached the equality of the sexes.<sup>2</sup> She was one of those first executed. Persecution, however, has long ceased, and as a result of her lead the position of woman in the cult is exceptionally good. Thus the last century has witnessed within the sphere of Islam, so commonly supposed to be impervious to change, one of the most rapid and radical religious changes recorded in history. There is therefore no ground for holding that in other Moslem countries progress is at an end.

Everything depends, broadly speaking, on the possibilities of culture-contact. The changes in Persia are traceable to the element of heretical habit which has persisted from pre-Moslem times; future and more scientific development will depend upon the assimilation of European knowledge. In Egypt, before the period of European intervention, freethinking was at a minimum; and though toleration was well developed as regarded Christians and

<sup>1</sup> H. Arakélian, *Mémoire sur Le Bábisme en Perse*, in the *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1902, 2 Ptie. Fasc. 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Gobineau, pp. 167 sq.; 180 sq.; Arakélian, p. 94.

Jews, freethinking Moslems dared not avow themselves.<sup>1</sup> Latterly rationalism tends to spread in Egypt as in other Moslem countries; even under Mohammed Ali the ruling Turks had begun to exhibit a "remarkable indifference to religion," and had "begun to undermine the foundations of El-Islam"; and so shrewd and dispassionate an observer as Lane expected that the common people would "soon assist in the work," and that "the overthrow of the whole fabric may reasonably be expected to ensue at a period not very remote."<sup>2</sup> To evolve such a change there will be required a diffusion of culture which is not at all likely to be rapid under any Government; but in any case the ground that is being lost by Islam in Egypt is not being retaken by Christianity.

In the other British dominions, Mohammedans, though less ready than educated Hindus to accept new ideas, cannot escape the rationalizing influence of European culture. Nor was it left to the British to introduce the rationalistic spirit in Moslem India. At the end of the sixteenth century the eclectic Emperor Akbar,<sup>3</sup> himself a devout worshipper of the Sun,<sup>4</sup> is found tolerantly comparing all religions,<sup>5</sup> depreciating Islam,<sup>6</sup> and arriving at such general views on the equivalence of all creeds, and on the improbability of eternal punishment,<sup>7</sup> as pass for liberal among Christians in our own day. If such views could be generated by a comparison of the creeds of pre-British India they must needs be encouraged now. The Mohammedan mass is of course still deeply fanatical, and habitually superstitious; but not any more immovably so than the early Saracens. In the eighteenth century arose the fanatical Wahabi sect, which aims at a puritanic restoration of primeval Islam, freed from the accretions of later belief, such as saint-worship; but the movement, though variously estimated, has had small success, and seems destined to extinction.<sup>8</sup> Of the traditional seventy-three sects in Islam only four to-day count as orthodox.<sup>9</sup>

It may be worth while, in conclusion, to note that the comparative prosperity or progressiveness of Islam as a proselytizing

<sup>1</sup> Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. 1871, i, 349, 356. "There are, I believe," says Lane (writing originally in 1836), "very few professed Muslims who are really unbelievers; and these dare not openly avow their unbelief through fear of losing their heads for their apostacy. I have heard of two or three such who have been rendered so by long and intimate intercourse with Europeans; and have met with one materialist, who has often had long discussions with me."  
<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ii, 309. (Suppl. III, "Of Late Innovations in Egypt.")

<sup>3</sup> See the documents reproduced by Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, App. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 214, 216.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 224, 226.

<sup>6</sup> Guyard, p. 45; Steiner, p. 5, note; Lane, *The Modern Egyptians*, ed. 1871, i, 137-38.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 226, 229.  
<sup>8</sup> Cp. Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, ch. xii, p. 292; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. pp. 315-19.

<sup>9</sup> Derenbourg, p. 72; Steiner, p. 1; Lane, i, 79.



and civilizing force in Africa—a phenomenon regarded even by some Christians with satisfaction, and by some with alarm<sup>1</sup>—is not strictly or purely a religious phenomenon. Moslem civilization suits with negro life in Africa in virtue not of the teaching of the Koran, but of the comparative nearness of the Arab to the barbaric life. He interbreeds with the natives, fraternizes with them (when not engaged in kidnapping them), and so stimulates their civilization; where the European colonist, looking down on them as an inferior species, isolates, depresses, and degrades them. It is thus conceivable that there is a future for Islam at the level of a low culture-stage; but the Arab and Turkish races out of Africa are rather the more likely to concur in the rationalistic movement of the higher civilization.

Even in Africa, however, a systematic observer notes, and predicts the extension of, "a strong tendency on the part of the Mohammedans towards an easy-going rationalism, such as is fast making way in Algeria, where the townspeople and the cultivators in the more settled districts, constantly coming in contact with Europeans, are becoming indifferent to the more inconvenient among their Mohammedan observances, and are content to live with little more religion than an observance of the laws, and a desire to get on well with their neighbours."<sup>2</sup> Thus at every culture-level we see the persistence of that force of intellectual variation which is the subject of our inquiry.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Lectures I and IV; Canon Isaac Taylor, address to Church Congress at Wolverhampton, 1887, and letters to *Times*, Oct. and Nov. 1887. On the other or anti-Mohammedan side see Canon Robinson, *Hausaland*, 3rd ed. 1900, p. 186 sq.—a somewhat obviously prejudiced argument. See pp. 190-91.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Harry H. Johnston, *History of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, 1899, p. 283.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHRISTENDOM IN THE MIDDLE AGES

IT would be an error, in view of the biological generalization proceeded on and the facts noted in this inquiry, to suppose that even in the Dark Ages, so called,<sup>1</sup> the spirit of critical reason was wholly absent from the life of Christendom. It had simply grown very rare, and was the more discountenanced where it strove to speak. But the most systematic suppression of heresies could not secure that no private heresy should remain. As Voltaire has remarked, there was "nearly always a small flock separated from the great."<sup>2</sup> Apart too from such quasi-rationalism as was involved in semi-Pelagianism,<sup>3</sup> critical heresy chronically arose even in the Byzantine provinces, which by the curtailment of the Empire had been left the most homogeneous and therefore the most manageable of the Christian States. It is necessary to note those survivals of partial freethinking, when we would trace the rise of modern thought.

#### § 1. Heresy in Byzantium

It was probably from some indirect influence of the new anti-idolatrous religion of Islam that in the eighth century the soldier-emperor, Leo the Isaurian, known as the Iconoclast, derived his aversion to the image-worship<sup>4</sup> which had long been as general in the Christian world as ever under polytheism. So gross had the superstition become that particular images were frequently selected as god-parents; of others the paint was partly scratched off to be mixed with the sacramental wine; and the bread was solemnly put in contact with them.<sup>5</sup> Leo began (726) by an edict simply causing

<sup>1</sup> This label has been applied by scholars to the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. One writer, who supposes it to cover the period from 500 to 1400, and protests, is attacking only a misconception. (M. A. Lane, *The Level of Social Motion*, New York, 1902, p. 232.) The Renaissance is commonly reckoned to begin about the end of the fourteenth century (cp. Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, ch. i). But the whole period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the fall of Constantinople, or to the Reformation, is broadly included in the "Middle Ages."

<sup>2</sup> *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv.

<sup>3</sup> According to which God predestinated good, but merely foreknew evil.

<sup>4</sup> For Leo's contacts with the Saracens see Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 14-20, 24, 31-32, 34-35, 37, etc., and compare p. 218. See also Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Ages*, 1833, p. 78, note 2; and Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 187, note.

<sup>5</sup> Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. i, 252.



the images to be placed so high that they could not be kissed, but on being met with resistance and rebellion he ordered their total removal (730). One view is that he saw image-worship to be the main hindrance to the spread of the faith among Jews and Moslems, and took his measures accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Save on this one point he was an orthodox Christian and Trinitarian, and his long effort to put down images and pictures was in itself rather fanatical<sup>2</sup> than rationalistic, though a measure of freethinking was developed among the religious party he created.<sup>3</sup> Of this spirit, as well as of the aversion to image-worship,<sup>4</sup> something must have survived the official restoration of idolatry; but the traces are few. The most zealous iconoclasts seem never to have risen above the flat inconsistency of treating the cross and the written gospels with exactly the same adoration that their opponents paid to images;<sup>5</sup> and their appeal to the scriptures—which was their first and last argument—was accordingly met by the retort that they themselves accepted the authority of tradition, as did the image-worshippers. The remarkable hostility of the army to the latter is to be explained, apparently, by the local bias of the eastern regions from which the soldiers were mainly recruited.

In the ninth century, when Saracen rivalry had stung the Byzantines into some partial revival of culture and science,<sup>6</sup> the all-learned Patriarch PHOTIUS (c. 820–891), who reluctantly accepted ecclesiastical office, earned a dangerous reputation for freethinking by declaring from the pulpit that earthquakes were produced by earthly causes and not by divine wrath.<sup>7</sup> But this was an almost solitary gleam of reason in a generation wholly given up to furious strife over the worship of images, and Photius was one of the image-worshippers. The battle swung from extreme to extreme. The emperor Michael II, "the Stammerer" (820–828), held a medium position, and accordingly acquired the reputation of a freethinker. A general under Leo V, "the Armenian," he had conspired against him, and when on the verge of execution had been raised to the

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> As to his hostility to letters see Gibbon, ch. liii—Bohn ed. vi, 228. Of course the other side were not any more liberal. Cp. Finlay, ii, 222.

<sup>3</sup> Gieseler, ii, 202. Per. III, Div. I, pt. i, § 1. In the next century this was said to have gone in some churches to the point of rejection of Christ. *Id.* p. 207, note 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 205, 207; Finlay, ii, 195.

<sup>5</sup> Neander, *Hist. of Chr. Church*, Bohn tr. v, 289; vi, 266.

<sup>6</sup> On their connection at this time with the culture-movement of the Khalifate of Mamoun, see Finlay, ii, 224–25; Gibbon, ch. liii—Bohn ed. vi, 228–29.

<sup>7</sup> Finlay, ii, 181, note. The enemies of Photius accused him of lending himself to the emperor's buffooneries. Neander, vi, 303–304. Cp. Mosheim, 9 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 7; and Gibbon, ch. xxxiii—ed. cited, vi, 229. Finlay declares (p. 222) that no Greek of the intellectual calibre of Photius, John the Grammarian, and Leo the Mathematician, has since appeared.

throne in place of Leo, who was assassinated at the altar. The new emperor aimed above all things at peace and quietness; but his methods were thoroughly Byzantine, and included the castration of the four sons of Leo. Michael himself is said to have doubted the future resurrection of men, to have maintained that Judas was saved, and to have doubted the existence of Satan because he is not named in the Pentateuch<sup>1</sup>—a species of freethinking not far removed from that of the Iconoclasts, whose grounds were merely Biblical. A generation later came Michael IV, "the Sot," bred a wastrel under the guardianship of his mother, Theodora (who in 842 restored image-worship and persecuted the Paulicians), and her brother Bardas, who ultimately put her in a convent. Michael, repeatedly defeated by the Saracens, long held his own at home. Taking into favour Basil, who married his (Michael's) mistress, he murdered Bardas, and a year later (867) was about to murder Basil in turn, when the latter anticipated him, murdered the emperor, and assumed the purple. It was under Basil, who put down the Iconoclasts, that Photius, after formally deposing and being deposed by the Pope of Rome (864–66) was really deposed and banished (868), to be restored to favour and office ten years later. In 886, on the death of Basil, he was again deposed, dying about 891. In that kaleidoscope of plot and faction, fanaticism and crime, there is small trace of sane thinking. Michael IV, in his disreputable way, was something of a freethinker, and could even with impunity burlesque the religious processions of the clergy,<sup>2</sup> the orthodox populace joining in the laugh; but there was no such culture at Constantinople as could develop a sober rationalism, or sustain it against the clergy if it showed its head. Intelligence in general could not rise above the plane of the wrangle over images. While the struggle lasted, it was marked by all the ferocity that belonged from the outset to Christian strifes; and in the end, as usual, the more irrational bias triumphed.

It was in a sect whose doctrine at one point coincided with iconoclasm that there were preserved such rude seeds of oriental rationalism as could survive the rule of the Byzantine emperors, and carry the stimulus of heresy to the west. The rise of the Paulicians in Armenia dates from the seventh century, and was nominally by way of setting up a creed on the lines of Paul as against the paganized system of the Church. Rising as they did on the borders of Persia, they were probably affected from the first by

<sup>1</sup> Neander, vi, 280.

<sup>2</sup> Finlay, ii, 174–75, 180.



Mazdean influences, as the dualistic principle was always affirmed by their virtual founder, Constantine, afterwards known as Sylvanus.<sup>1</sup> Their original tenets seem to have been anti-Manichean, anti-Gnostic (though partly Marcionite), opposed to the worship of images and relics, to sacraments, to the adoration of the Virgin, of saints, and of angels, and to the acceptance of the Old Testament; and in an age in which the reading of the Sacred Books had already come to be regarded as a privilege of monks and priests, they insisted on reading the New Testament for themselves.<sup>2</sup> In this they were virtually founding on the old pagan conception of religion, under which all heads of families could offer worship and sacrifice without the intervention of a priest, as against the Judæo-Christian sacerdotalism, which vetoed anything like a private *cultus*. In the teaching of Sylvanus, further, there were distinct Manichean and Gnostic characteristics—notably, hostility to Judaism; the denial that Christ had a real human body, capable of suffering; and the doctrine that baptism and the communion were properly spiritual and not physical rites.<sup>3</sup> In the ninth century, when they had become a powerful and militant sect, often at war with the empire, they were still marked by their refusal to make any difference between priests and laymen. Anti-ecclesiasticism was thus a main feature of the whole movement; and the Byzantine Government, recognizing in its doctrine a particularly dangerous heresy, had at once bloodily attacked it, causing Sylvanus to be stoned to death.<sup>4</sup> Still it grew, even to the length of exhibiting the usual phenomena of schism within itself. One section obtained the protection of the first iconoclastic emperor, who agreed with them on the subject of images; and a later leader, Sergius or Tychicus, won similar favour from Nicephorus I; but Leo the Armenian (suc. 813), fearing the stigma of their other heresies, and having already trouble enough from his iconoclasm, set up against them, as against the image-worshippers, a new and cruel persecution.<sup>5</sup> They were thus driven

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, p. 85. It is noteworthy that the "heathen" Magyars held the Mazdean dualistic principle, and that their evil power was named Armanyos (=Ahrimanes). Mailáth, *Geschichte der Magyaren*, 1828, i, 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, ch. liv; Mosheim, 9 Cent. pt. ii, ch. 5; Gieseler, Per. III, Div. I, pt. i, § 3; G. S. Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Waldenses*, 1838, pp. 32-60. Some fresh light is thrown on the Paulician doctrines by the discovery of the old Armenian book, *The Key of Truth*, edited and translated by F. C. Conybeare, Oxford, 1898. It belonged to the Armenian sect of Thonraki, or Thonrakians, or Thondrakians—people of the village of Thondrac (Neander, vi, 347)—founded by one Sembat, originally a Paulician, in the ninth century (Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 201; Neander, last cit.). For a criticism of Mr. Conybeare's theories see the *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1899, Art. V.

<sup>3</sup> Gieseler, Per. III, §§ 45, 46, vol. ii, pp. 489, 492; Hardwick, p. 86. The sect of Euchites, also anti-priestly, seem to have joined them. Faber denies any Manichean element.

<sup>4</sup> Gibbon, as cited, vi, 241.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, vi, 242; Hardwick, pp. 88-90.

over to the Saracens, whose advance-guard they became as against the Christian State; but the iconoclast Constantine Copronymus sympathetically<sup>1</sup> transplanted many of them to Constantinople and Thrace, thus introducing their doctrine into Europe. The Empress Theodora (841-855), who restored image-worship,<sup>2</sup> sought to exterminate those left in Armenia, slaying, it is said, a hundred thousand.<sup>3</sup> Many of the remnant were thus forced into the arms of the Saracens; and the sect did the empire desperate mischief during many generations.<sup>4</sup>

Meantime those planted in Thrace, in concert with the main body, carried propaganda into Bulgaria, and these again were further reinforced by refugees from Armenia in the ninth century, and in the tenth by a fresh colony transplanted from Armenia by the emperor John Zimisce, who valued them as a bulwark against the barbarous Slavs.<sup>5</sup> Fresh persecution under Alexius I at the end of the eleventh century failed to suppress them; and imperial extortion constantly drove to their side numbers of fresh adherents,<sup>6</sup> while the Bulgarians for similar reasons tended in mass to adopt their creed as against that of Constantinople. So greatly did the cult flourish that at its height it had a regular hierarchy, notably recalling that of the early Manicheans—with a pope, twelve *magistri*, and seventy-two bishops, each of whom had a *filius major* and *filius minor* as his assistants. Withal the democratic element remained strong, the laying on of the hands of communicants on the heads of newcomers being part of the rite of reception into full membership. Thus it came about that from Bulgaria there passed into western Europe,<sup>7</sup> partly through the Slavonic sect called Bogomiles or Bogomilians<sup>8</sup> (= *Theophiloi*, "lovers of God"), who were akin to the Paulicians, partly by more general influences,<sup>9</sup> a contagion of democratic and anti-ecclesiastical heresy; so that the very name Bulgar became the French *bougre*=heretic—and worse.<sup>10</sup> It specified the most

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, vi, 245, and note; Finlay, ii, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the express decision, the use of statues proper (*εἰκόνες*) gradually disappeared from the Greek Church, the disuse finally creating a strong antipathy, while pictures and *ikons* remained in reverence (Tozer's note to Finlay, ii, 165; cp. Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 190, note). It is probable that the sheer loss of artistic skill counted for much in the change. Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, bk. xiv, ch. ix; 4th ed. ix, 308-12. It is noteworthy that, whereas in the struggle over images their use was for two long periods legally abolished, it was in both cases restored by empresses Irene and Theodora.

<sup>3</sup> Hardwick, p. 80, note; Neander, vi, 340.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Kurtz, *His. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. i, 271.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, vi, 246; Finlay, iii, 64; Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v.

<sup>6</sup> Finlay, iii, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Gibbon, as cited; R. Lane Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought*, 1884, pp. 91-96; Mosheim, 11 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v.

<sup>8</sup> Finlay, iii, 67-68; Mosheim, 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 2. Hardwick, pp. 302-305; Kurtz, i, 270-73.

<sup>9</sup> Gieseler, Per. III, Div. II, pt. iii, § 46.

<sup>10</sup> Gibbon, vi, 249, note; Poole, p. 91, note; De Potter, *L'Esprit de L'Eglise*, 1821, vi, 16, note.



obvious source of the new anti-Romanist heresies of the Albigenses, if not of the Vaudois (Waldenses).

### § 2. Critical Heresy in the West

In the west, meanwhile, where the variety of social elements was favourable to new life, heresy of a rationalistic kind was not wholly lacking. About the middle of the eighth century we find one Feargal or Vergilius, an Irish priest in Bavaria, accused by St. Boniface, his enemy, of affirming, "in defiance of God and his own soul," the doctrine of the antipodes,<sup>1</sup> which must have reached him through the ancient Greek lore carried to Ireland in the primary period of Christianization of that province. Of that influence we have already seen a trace in Pelagius and Cœlestius; and we shall see more later in John the Scot. After being deposed by the Pope, Vergilius was reinstated; was made Bishop of Salzburg, and held the post till his death; and was even sainted afterwards; but the doctrine disappeared for centuries from the Christian world.

Other heresies, however, asserted themselves. Though image-worship finally triumphed there as in the east, it had strong opponents, notably Claudius, bishop of Turin (fl. 830) under the emperor Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, and his contemporary Agobard, bishop of Lyons.<sup>2</sup> It is a significant fact that both men were born in Spain; and either to Saracen or to Jewish influence—the latter being then strong in the Moorish and even in the Christian<sup>3</sup> world—may fairly be in part attributed their marked bias against image-worship. Claudius was slightly and Agobard well educated in Latin letters, so that an early impression<sup>4</sup> would seem to have been at work in both cases. However that may be, they stood out as singularly rationalistic theologians in an age of general ignorance and superstition. Claudius vehemently resisted alike image-worship, saint-worship, and the Papal claims, and is recorded to have termed a council of bishops which condemned him "an assembly of asses."<sup>5</sup> Agobard, in turn, is quite extraordinary in the thoroughness of his rejection of popular superstition, being not only an iconoclast but an enemy to prayer for change in the

<sup>1</sup> Boniface, *Ep. lxxvi.* cited by Poole, p. 23; Reid's Mosheim, p. 263, note 3; Neander, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, Bohn tr. v. 86-87; Hardwick, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> For excellent accounts of both see Mr. Poole's *Illustrations*, pp. 28-50. As to Claudius cp. Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, Eng. tr. 1848, pp. 13-42, and Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses*, bk. iii, ch. iv.

<sup>3</sup> See Mr. Poole's *Illustrations*, pp. 46-48, for an account of the privileges then accorded to Jews.

<sup>4</sup> This is not incompatible with their having opposed both Saracens (Claudius in actual war) and Jews, as Christian bishops.

<sup>5</sup> Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 37.

weather, to belief in incantations and the power of evil spirits, to the ordeal by fire, to the wager of battle,<sup>1</sup> and to the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Books. In an age of enormous superstition and deep ignorance, he maintained within the Church that Reason was the noble gift of God.<sup>2</sup> He was a rationalist born out of due time.<sup>3</sup>

A grain of rationalism, as apart from professional self-interest, may also have entered into the outcry made at this period by the clergy against the rigidly predestinarian doctrine of the monk Gottschalk.<sup>4</sup> His enemy, Rabanus or Hrabanus (called "the Moor"), seems again to represent some Saracen influence, inasmuch as he reproduced the scientific lore of Isidore of Seville.<sup>5</sup> But the philosophic semi-rationalism of JOHN SCOTUS (d. 875), later known as Erigena (John the Scot=of Ireland—the original "Scots" being Irish), seems to be traceable to the Greek studies which had been cherished in Christianized Ireland while the rest of western Europe lost them, and represents at once the imperfect beginning of the relatively rationalistic philosophy of Nominalism<sup>6</sup> and the first western revival of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, howbeit by way of accommodation to the doctrine of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

That John the Scot was an Irishman remains practically certain, even if we give up the term "Erigena," which, as has been shown by Floss, the most careful editor of his works, is not found in the oldest MSS. The reading there is Ierugena, which later shades into Erugena and Eriugena. (Cp. Ueberweg, i, 359; Poole, pp. 55-56, note; Dr. Th. Christlieb, *Leben und Lehre des Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1860, p. 14 sq.; and Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie im Mittelalter*, 1861, pp. 38-40.) From this elusive cognomen no certain inference can be drawn, too many being open; though the fact that John had himself coined the term *Græiugena* for a late Greek writer makes it

<sup>1</sup> This when the Church found its account in adopting all such usages. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, pp. 242, 280, etc. It is to be noted, however, that one Council, that of Valence, 855, perhaps under the influence of Agobard's teaching, published a canon prohibiting all duels, and praying the emperor to abolish them. Cited by Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 242, note, from Fleury.

<sup>2</sup> *De Grandine et tonitruis*, c. 3; and *De imaginibus*, c. 13, cited by Reuter.

<sup>3</sup> "He had the clearest head in the whole ninth century; and as an influence (*Mann der Tendenz*) is above comparison" (Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 24). As to his acute handling of the thorny question of reason and authority see Reuter, i, 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> Noack, *Philosophie-Geschichtliches Lexikon*, s. v. RABANUS. As to the doubtful works in which Rabanus coincides with Scotus Erigena, cp. Poole, p. 336; Noack, as cited; Ueberweg, i, 367-68.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, pp. 366, 371; Poole, pp. 99, 101, 336.

<sup>6</sup> Ueberweg, pp. 356-65. That there was, however, an Irish scholasticism as early as the eighth century is shown by Mosheim, 8 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 6, note 3. Cp. Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1861, p. 428 sq.; Taillandier, *Scot Erigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 198.



likely that he called himself *Ierugena* in the sense of "born in the holy (island)" = Ireland. But the name *Scotus*, occurring without the *Ierugena*, is common in old MSS.; and it is almost impossible that any save a Scot of Ireland should have possessed the scholarship of John in the ninth century. In the west, Greek scholarship and philosophy had been special to Ireland from the time of Pelagius; and it is from Greek sources that John draws his inspiration and cast of thought. M. Taillandier not unjustly calls the Ireland of that era "l'île des saints, mais aussi l'île des libres penseurs." (*Scot Érigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 64.) To the same effect Huber, pp. 40-41. In writing that Johannes "was of Scottish nationality, but was probably born and brought up in Ireland," Ueberweg (i, 358) obscures the fact that the people of Ireland were the *Scoti* of that period. All the testimony goes to show "that Ireland was called *Scotia*, and its ruling people *Scoti*, from the first appearance of these names down to the eleventh century. But that [the] present Scotland was called *Scotia*, or its people *Scoti*, before the eleventh century, not so much as one single authority can be produced" (Pinkerton, *Enquiry into the History of Scotland*, 1789, ii, 237). Irish Scots gave their name to Scotland, and it was adopted by the Teutonic settlers.

While the land of John the Scot's birth is thus fairly certain, the place of his death remains a mystery. Out of a statement by Asser that King Alfred made one John, a priest, Abbot of Athelney, and that the said Abbot was murdered at the altar by hired assassins, there grew a later story that Alfred made John the Scot Abbot of Malmesbury, and that he was slain with the *styli* of two of his pupils. It is clear that the John of Asser was an "Old Saxon," and not the philosopher; and it is difficult to doubt that the second story, which arises in the twelfth century, is a hearsay distortion of the first. Cp. Christlieb, who argues (p. 42 sq.) for two Johns, one of them *Scotus*, and both assassinated, with Huber, who sets forth (p. 108 sq.) the view here followed. There is really no adequate ground for believing that John the Scot was ever a priest. We know not where or when he died; but the presumption is that it was in France, and not long after the death of his patron Charles—877. (Huber, p. 121.)

Called in by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, himself a normally superstitious believer,<sup>1</sup> to answer Gottschalk, John Scotus in turn was accused of heresy, as he well might be on many points of his treatise, *De Praedestinatione*<sup>2</sup> (851). He fiercely and not very

<sup>1</sup> Lea, as cited, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> "The learned and freethinking guest of Charles le Chauve," Hardwick calls him, p. 176. It needed the protection of Charles to save him from the orthodox, Hincmar included. See Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1840, iii, 94-95, as to the anger against him.

fairly condemned Gottschalk as a heretic, charging him with denying both divine grace and freewill, but without disposing of Gottschalk's positive grounds; and arguing that God could not be the cause of sin, as if Gottschalk had not said the same thing. His superior speculative power comes out in his undertaking to show that for the Divine Being sin is *non-ens*; and that therefore that Being cannot properly be said either to foreknow or to predestinate, or to punish. But the argument becomes inconsistent inasmuch as it further affirms Deity to have so constituted the order of things that sin punishes itself.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that in assimilating his pantheistic conceptions he had failed to think out their incompatibility with any theistic dogma whatever; his reasoning, on the whole, being no more coherent than Gottschalk's. He had in fact set out from an arbitrary theistic position that was at once Judaic, Christian, and Platonic, and went back on one line to the Gnostics; while on another his argument that sin has no real existence is a variant from an old thesis—made current, as we saw, by Euclides of Megara—with which orthodoxy had met the Manicheans.<sup>2</sup> But to the abstract doctrine he gave a new practical point by declaring that the doctrine of hell-fire was a mere allegory; that heaven and hell alike were states of consciousness, not places.<sup>3</sup> And if such concrete freethinking were not enough to infuriate the orthodox, they had from him the most explicit declarations that authority is derivable solely from reason.<sup>4</sup>

In philosophy proper he must be credited, despite his inconsistency, with deep and original thought.<sup>5</sup> Like every theologian of philosophic capacity before and since, he passes into pantheism as soon as he grapples closely with the difficulties of theism, and "the expressions which he uses are identical with those which were afterwards employed by Spinoza.....It was a tradition of the fourth or fifth century transferred to the ninth, an echo from Alexandria."<sup>6</sup> Condemned by Pope Nicholas I and by two Church Councils,<sup>7</sup> his writings none the less availed to keep that echo audible to later centuries.

The range and vigour of his practical rationalism may be

<sup>1</sup> See the whole argument summarized by Huber, p. 59 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, pp. 61, 63, 65; Neander, Bohn tr. vi, 198 sq.; and the present writer's introd. to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900, p. xxxiv. And see above, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *De divisione Naturæ*, l. v; *De Praedestinatione*, c. 17; Poole, pp. 71-72; Neander, vi, 198-99; Huber, as cited, p. 405.

<sup>4</sup> In the treatise *On the Division of Nature*. See the extracts given in the Cabinet Cyclopædia survey of *Europe in the Middle Ages*, ii, 266-68. They prove, says the author of the survey, "that John Erigena had none of the spirit of Christianity."

<sup>5</sup> Poole, pp. 64, 76.

<sup>6</sup> S. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pp. 25-26.

<sup>7</sup> Huber, pp. 435-40.



gathered from his attitude in the controversy begun by the abbot Paschasius Radbert (831) on the nature of the Eucharist. Paschasius taught that there was a real transformation of the bread and wine into the divine body and blood; and the doctrine, thus nakedly put, startled the freer scholars of the time, who were not yet habituated to Latin orthodoxy. Another learned monk, Ratramnus, who had written a treatise on predestination at the request of the rationalizing emperor, Charles the Bald (discussing the problem in Gottschalk's sense<sup>1</sup> without naming him), produced on the same monarch's invitation a treatise in which transubstantiation was denied, and the "real presence" was declared to be spiritual<sup>2</sup>—a view already known to Paschasius as being held by some.<sup>3</sup> John Scotus, also asked by the emperor to write on the subject, went so far as to argue that the bread and wine were merely symbols and memorials.<sup>4</sup> As usual, the irrational doctrine became that of the Church;<sup>5</sup> but the other must have wrought for reason in secret. For the rest, he set forth the old "modal" view of the Trinity, resolving it into the different conceptual aspects of the universe, and thus propounding one more vital heresy.<sup>6</sup>

Nothing but a succession of rationalizing emperors could have secured continuance for such teaching as that of Ratramnus and John the Scot. For a time, the cruelty meted out to Gottschalk kept up feeling in favour of his views; Bishop Remigius of Lyons condemned Hincmar's treatment of him; and others sought to maintain his positions, with modifications, though Hincmar carried resolutions condemning them at the second Synod of Chiersy. On the other hand, Archbishop Wenilo of Sens, Bishop Prudentius of Troyes, and Florus, a deacon of Lyons, all wrote against the doctrines of John the Scot; and the second Synod of Valence (855), while opposing Hincmar and affirming duplex predestination, denounced with fury the reasonings of John the Scot, ascribing them to his nation as a whole.<sup>7</sup> The pope taking the same line, the fortunes of the rationalistic view of the eucharist and of hell-fire were soon determined for the Middle Ages, though in the year 950 we find the Archbishop of Canterbury confronted by English ecclesiastics who asserted that there was no transubstantiation, the elements being merely a figure of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Bohn tr. vi, 192.

<sup>2</sup> *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, rep. Oxford, 1839, cc. 8-16, 29, 56, 72-76, etc.

<sup>3</sup> C. 19: "Non sicut quidam volunt, anima sola hoc mysterio pascitur." Neander, vi, 210.

<sup>4</sup> Hardwick, pp. 178, 181; Neander, vi, 217.

<sup>5</sup> Poole, p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> C. 6: "Ineptas questionunculas et aniles pæne fabulas Scotorumque pultes." Neander, vi, 207.

<sup>8</sup> Neander, vi, 219, citing Mabillon, *Analecta*, i, 207.

The economic explanation clearly holds alike as regards the attack on John and the condemnation of Gottschalk for a doctrine which had actually been established for centuries, on the authority of Augustine, as strict orthodoxy. In Augustine's time, the determining pressures were not economic: a bankrupt world was seeking to explain its fate; and Augustine had merely carried a majority with him against Pelagius, partly by his personal influence, partly by force of the fatalist mood of the time. But in the renascent world of Gottschalk's day the economic exploitation of fear had been carried several stages forward by the Church; and the question of predestination had a very direct financial bearing. The northern peoples, accustomed to compound for crimes by money payments, had so readily played into the hands of the priesthood by their eagerness to buy surcease of purgatorial pain that masses for the dead and "penitential certificates" were main sources of ecclesiastical revenue. Therefore the condemnations of such abuses passed by the Councils, on the urging of the more thoughtful clergy, were constantly frustrated by the plain pecuniary interest of the priests.<sup>1</sup> It even appears that the eucharist was popularly regarded not as a process of religious "communion," but as a magical rite objectively efficacious for bodily preservation in this life and the next. Thus it came about that often "priests presented the offering of the mass alone and by themselves, without any participation of the congregation."<sup>2</sup>

If then it were to be seriously understood that the future lot of all was foreordained, all expenditure on masses for the dead, or to secure in advance a lightening of purgatorial penance, or even to buy off penance on earth, was so much waste; and the Teutons were still as ready as other barbarians to make their transactions with Church, God, and the saints a matter of explicit bargain.<sup>3</sup> Gottschalk, accordingly, had to be put down, in the general interests of the Church. It could not truthfully be pretended that he deviated from Augustine, for he actually held by the "semi-Pelagian" inconsistency that God predestinates good, but merely foreknows evil.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus Cambrensis for an inside view of the avarice of the clergy in his day.

<sup>2</sup> Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, v, 187. See the whole section for a good account of the general economic and moral evolution. Neander repeatedly (pp. 186-87) insists on the "magical" element in the doctrine of the mass, as established by Gregory the Great.

<sup>3</sup> See Neander, as cited, v, 183. The point was well put some centuries later by the Italian story-teller Masuccio, an orthodox Catholic but a vehement anti-clericalist, in a generalization concerning the monks: "The best punishment for them would be for God to abolish Purgatory; they would then receive no more alms, and would be forced to go back to their spades." Cited by Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. 1893, p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, vi, 182. Rabanus Maurus distinctly belied him on this score. (*Id.* p. 183.)



There was in fact no clear opposition between his affirmations and those of Rabanus Maurus, who also professed to be an Augustinian; but the latter laid forensic stress on the "desire" of God that all men should be saved, and on the formula that Christ died for all; while Gottschalk, more honestly, insisted that predestination is predestination, and applied the principle not merely, as had been customary, to the future state of the good, but to that of the bad,<sup>1</sup> insisting on a *prædestinatio duplex*. His own fate was thus economically predestinate; and he was actually tortured by the scourge till he cast into the fire his written defence, "a document which contained nothing but a compilation of testimonies from Scripture, and from the older church-teachers."<sup>2</sup>

Gottschalk later challenged a fourfold ordeal of "boiling water, oil, and pitch." His primary doctrine had been the immutability of the divine will; but he brought himself to the belief that God would work a miracle in his favour. His conception of "foreordination" was thus framed solely with regard to the conception of a future state. The ordeal was not granted, the orthodox party fearing to try conclusions, and he died without the sacraments, rather than recant. Then began the second reaction of feeling against his chief persecutor, Hincmar. Neander, vi, 190.

A recent writer, who handles very intelligently and temperately the problem of persecution, urges that in that connection "one ought not to lay great stress on the old argument of the Hallam and Macaulay school as to the strength of vested interests, though it has a certain historical importance, because the priest must subsist somehow" (*Religious Persecution: a Study in Psychology*, by E. S. P. Haynes, 1904, p. 4). If the "certain importance" be in the ratio of the certainty of the last adduced fact, the legitimate "stress" on the argument in question would seem sufficient for most purposes. The writer adds the note: "It is not unfair, however, to quote the case of Dr. Middleton, who, writing to Lord Radnor in 1750 in respect of his famous work on Miracles, admits frankly enough that he would never have given the clergy any trouble, had he received some good appointment in the church." If the essayist has met with no other historic fact illustrative of the play of vested interests in ecclesiastical history, it is extremely candid of him to mention that one. Later on, however, he commits himself to the proposition that "the history of medieval persecution leads one to infer that the clergy as a whole were roused to much

<sup>1</sup> Formerly, only the saved had been spoken of as *prædestinati*, the reprobate being called *præsciti*. Neander, vi, 181.  
<sup>2</sup> Neander, vi, 187. Cp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. p. 418; and Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de France*, 1840, iii, 92.

greater activity by menaces to their material comforts in this world than by an altruistic anxiety for the fate of lay souls in the next" (*id.* p. 60. Cp. p. 63). This amount of "stress" on vested interests will probably satisfy most members of the Hallam and Macaulay school; and is ample for the purposes of the present contention.

From this point onward, the slow movement of new ideas may for a time be conveniently traced on two general lines—one that of the philosophic discussion in the schools, reinforced by Saracen influences, the other that of partially rationalistic and democratic heresy among the common people, by way first of contagion from the East. The latter was on the whole as influential for sane thought as the former, apart from such ecclesiastical freethinking as that of Berengar of Tours and Roscelin (Rousselin), Canon of Compiègne. Berengar (c. 1050) was led by moral reflection<sup>1</sup> to doubt the priestly miracle of the Eucharist, and thenceforth he entered into a stormy controversy on the subject, in the course of which he twice recanted under bodily fear, but passionately returned to his original positions. Fundamentally sincere, and indignantly resentful of the gross superstition prevailing in the Church, he struck fiercely in his writings at Popes Leo IX and Nicholas II and Archbishop Lanfranc,<sup>2</sup> all of whom had opposed him. At length, after much strife, he threw up the contest, spending the latter part of his long life in seclusion; Pope Gregory VII, who was personally friendly to him, having finally shielded him from persecution. It seems clear that, though accused, with others of his school, of rejecting certain of the gospel miracles,<sup>3</sup> he never became a disbeliever; his very polemic testifying to the warmth of his belief on his own lines. His teaching, however, which went far by reason of the vividness of his style, doubtless had the effect of promoting not only the rationalistic-Christian view of the Eucharist,<sup>4</sup> but a criticism which went further, inasmuch as his opponents forced on the bystanders the question as to what reality there was in the Christian creed if his view were true.<sup>5</sup> All such influences, however, were but slight in total mass compared with the overwhelming weight of the economic interest of the priesthood; and not till the Reformation was Berengar's doctrine accepted by a single organized sect. The orthodox doctrine, in fact, was all-essential to the Catholic Church. Given the daily miracle of the "real presence," the Church had a vital hold on the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Poole, p. 103. Cp. Neander, vi, 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 255-56.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 258. As to the wide extent of the discussion see Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, vi, 237-38.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 257.



world, and the priest was above all lay rivalry. Seeing as much, the Council of the Lateran (1059) met the new criticism by establishing the technical doctrine of the real presence for the first time as an article of faith; and as such it will doubtless stand while there is a Catholic priesthood. Berengar's original view must have been shared by thousands; but no Catholic carried on his propaganda. The question had become one of life and death.

Berengar's forced prevarications, which are unsympathetically set forth by Mosheim (11 Cent., pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 13-18), are made much more intelligible in the sympathetic survey of Neander (vi, 225-60). See also the careful inquiry of Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 91 sq. As to Berengar's writings, see further Murdock's note to Mosheim, last cit., § 18. The formal compromise forced on him by Pope Hildebrand, who was personally friendly to him, consisted in adding to his denial of the change of the bread and wine into "body and blood" the doctrine that the body and blood were "superadded to the bread and wine in and by their consecration." This formula, of course, did not represent the spirit of Berengar's polemic. As to the disputes on the subject, which ran to the most unseemly length of physiological detail, see Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv. It is noteworthy that Augustine had very expressly set forth a metaphorical interpretation of the Eucharist—*De doctrina christiana*, l. iii, c. 16. But just as the Church later set aside the verdict of Thomas Aquinas that the Virgin Mary was "born in sin," so did it reverse Augustine's judgment on the Eucharist. Always the more irrational view carried the day, as being more propitious to sacerdotal claims.

So far as the Church by her keenly self-regarding organization could attain it, all opinion was kept within the strict bounds of her official dogma, in which life in the Middle Ages so long stagnated. For centuries, despite the turmoil of many wars—which, indeed, helped to arrest thought—the life of the mind presented a uniformity hardly now conceivable. The common expectation of the ending of the world, in the year 1000, in particular had an immense prepotency of paralysing men's spirits; and the grooves of habit thus fixed were hard to alter. For most men, the notion of possible innovation in thought did not exist: the usual was the sacred: the very ideal of an improvement or reformation, when it arose, was one of reaching back to a far-away perfection of the past, never of remoulding things on lines laid down by reason. Yet even into this half-stifled world there entered, by eastern ways, and first in the guise of rude demotic departures from priestly prescription, the indestructible spirit of change.

### § 3. Popular Anti-Clerical Heresy

The first Western traces of the imported Paulician heresy are about the year 1000,<sup>1</sup> when a rustic of Châlons is heard of as destroying a cross and a religious picture, and asserting that the prophets are not wholly to be believed.<sup>2</sup> From this time forward, the world having begun to breathe again after the passing of the year 1000 without any sign of the Day of Judgment, heresy begins to multiply, the chief movers being "distinguished by a tendency to rationalism."<sup>3</sup> In 1010 there is trace of it in Aquitaine.<sup>4</sup> In the year 1022 (or, as the date is sometimes put, in 1017) we hear of the unveiling of a secret society of rationalizing mystics at Orleans, ten canons of one church being members.<sup>5</sup> An Italian woman was said to be the founder, and thirteen were burned alive on their refusal to recant. According to the records, they denied all miracles, including the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection; rejected baptism and the miracle of the Eucharist; took the old "Docetic" view of Jesus, denying his actual humanity; and affirmed the eternity of matter and the non-creation of the world. They were also accused, like the first Christians, of promiscuous nocturnal orgies and of eating sacrificed infants; but unless such charges are to be held valid in the other case, they cannot be here.<sup>6</sup> The stories told of the Manichean community who lived in the castle of Monforte, near Asti in Lombardy, in the years 1025-1040, and who at length were likewise burned alive, are similarly mixed with fable.<sup>7</sup> On this case it is recorded that, while the Archbishop of Milan investigated the heresy, the burning of the victims was the work of the fanatical populace of Milan, and was done against his will.

A less savage treatment may have made possible the alleged success of Gerhard, bishop of Cambray and Arras, in reconciling to the Church at Arras, in 1025 or 1030, a number of laymen—also said to have been taught by an Italian—who as a body rejected all external worship, setting aside priestly baptism and the sacraments, penance and images, funeral rites, holy oil, church bells, cross-

<sup>1</sup> In 945, however, Atto, Bishop of Vercell, is found complaining that some people from the Italian border had introduced heresies.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Hardwick, p. 203. <sup>4</sup> Kurtz, *History of the Christian Church*, Eng. tr. 1868, i, 435.

<sup>5</sup> Hénault, *Abrégé chronologique*, ann. 1022; Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Relig. and Church*, Eng. tr. Bohn ed. vi, 349 sq.; Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; De Potter, *L'Esprit de l'Eglise*, vi, 18-19; Poole, pp. 96-98; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 104, 108-109, 218; Gieseler, *Per. III, Div. ii*, § 46. The contemporary accounts say nothing as to the heretics being Manicheans. Neander, p. 350, note.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 386; Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, p. 33; Waddington, p. 356; Hardwick, p. 203, note, and p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> De Potter, pp. 20-21; Gieseler, as cited, p. 497; Lea, i, 104, 109.



worship, altars, and even churches, and denied the necessity of an order of priests.<sup>1</sup> Few of the Protestants of a later age were so thorough-going; but the fact that many of the sect stood to the old Marcionite veto on marriage and the sexual instinct gives to their propaganda its own cast of fanaticism. This last tenet it seemingly was that gave the Paulicians their common Greek name of *cathari*,<sup>2</sup> "the pure," corrupted or assimilated in Italian to *gazzari*, whence presumably the German word for heretic, *Ketzer*.<sup>3</sup> Such a doctrine had the double misfortune that if acted on it left the sect without the normal recruitment of members' children, while if departed from it brought on them the stigma of wanton hypocrisy; and as a matter of fact every movement of the kind, ancient and modern, seems to have contained within it the two extremes of asceticism and licence, the former generating the latter.

It could hardly, however, have been the ascetic doctrine that won for the new heresy its vogue in medieval Europe; nor is it likely that the majority of the heretics even professed it. If, on the other hand, we ask how it was that in an age of dense superstition so many uneducated people were found to reject so promptly the most sacrosanct doctrines of the Church, it seems hardly less difficult to account for the phenomenon on the bare ground of their common sense. Critical common sense there must have been, to allow of it at all; but it is reasonable to suppose that then, as clearly happened later at the Reformation, common sense had a powerful stimulus in pecuniary interest.

With the evidence as to Christian practice in the fourth century on the one hand, and the later evidence as to clerical life on the other, we are certain of a common play of financial motive throughout the Middle Ages. And whereas it is intelligible that such rapacity as we have seen described by Libanius should evoke a heresy which rejected alike religious ceremonial and the claims of the priest, it is further reasonable to surmise that resentment of priestly rapacity and luxury helped men to similar heresy in Western Europe when the doctrine reached them. If any centuries are to be singled out as those of maximum profligacy and extortion

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, as last cited, § 4; Gieseler, ii, 496 (§ 46); Hardwick, pp. 203, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim, 11 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 2, and Murdock's notes; 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hardwick, p. 306; Kurtz, i, 433. The derivation through the Italian is however disputed. Cp. Murdock's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 385, and Gieseler, ii, 486. The *Chazari*, a Turkish (Crimean) people, partly Christian and partly Moslem in the ninth century (Gieseler, as cited), may have given the name of *Gazzari*, as *Bulgar* gave *Bougre*; and the German *Ketzer* may have come directly from *Chazar*. The Christianity of the Chazars, influenced by neighbourhood with Islam, seems to have been a very free syncretism.

among the clergy, they are the ninth and the three following.<sup>1</sup> It had been part of the policy of Charlemagne everywhere to strengthen the hands of the clergy by way of checking the power of the nobles;<sup>2</sup> and in the disorder after his death the conflicting forces were in semi-anarchic competition. The feudal habit of appointing younger sons and underlings to livings wherever possible; the disorders and strifes of the papacy; and the frequent practice of dispossessing priests to reward retainers, thereby driving the dispossessed to plunder on their own account, must together have created a state of things almost past exaggeration. It was a matter of course that the clergy on their part should make the utmost possible use of their influence over men's superstitious fears in order to acquire bequests of lands;<sup>3</sup> and such bequests in turn exasperated the heirs thus disinherited.

Thus orthodoxy and heterodoxy alike had strong economic motives; and in these may be placed a main part of the explanation of the gross savagery of persecution now normal in the Church. Such a heresy as that of Gottschalk, we saw, by denying to the priest all power of affecting the predestined course of things here or hereafter, logically imperilled the very existence of the whole hierarchy, and was by many resented accordingly. The same principle entered into the controversies over the Eucharist. Still more would the clergy resent the new Manichean heresy, of which every element, from the Euchite tenet of the necessity of personal prayer and mortification, as against the innate demon, to the rejection of all the rites of normal worship and all the pretensions of priests, was radically hostile to the entire organization of the Church. When the heretics in due course developed a priestly system of their own,<sup>4</sup> the hostility was only the more embittered.

The crisis was the more acute, finally, because in the latter part of the tenth century the common expectation that the world would end with the year 1000 had inspired enormous donations to the Church,<sup>5</sup> with a proportionally oppressive effect on the general population, moving them to economic self-defence. It is in fact clear that an anti-clerical element entered largely into the beginnings of the communal movement in France in the eleventh century. In

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Gieseler, Per. III, §§ 24, 34; Abbé Queant, *Gerbert, ou Sylvestre II*, 1868, pp. 3-5, citing Chevé, *Histoire des papes*, t. ii, and Baronius, *Annales*, ad ann. 900, n. 1; Mosheim, 9 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1-4; with his and Murdock's refs.; 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1, 2; 11 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 1; ch. iii, §§ 1-3; 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 1; 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1-7. The authorities are often eminent Churchmen, as Agobard, RATHERIUS, Bernard, and Gregory VIII.

<sup>2</sup> See Mosheim, 8 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 5, note z. Cp. Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ii, 170.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Prof. Abdy, *Lectures on Feudalism*, 1890, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Mosheim, 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Morin, *Origines de la démocratie*, 3e éd. pp. 164-65; Mosheim, 10 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 3.



1024 we find the citizens of Cambrai forming a league to drive out the canons;<sup>1</sup> and though that beginning of revolt was crushed out by massacre, the same spirit expressed itself in heresy. The result was that religious persecution ere long eclipsed political. Bishop Wazon of Lüttich (d. 1048) in vain protested against the universal practice of putting the heretics to death.<sup>2</sup> Manicheans who were detected in 1052 at Goslar, in Germany, were hanged,<sup>3</sup> a precedent being thus established in the day of small things.

All this went on while the course of the papacy was so scandalous to the least exacting moral sense that only the ignorance of the era could sustain any measure of reverence for the Church as an institution. In the year 963 the ablest of the emperors of that age, Otto the Great, had the consent of the people of Rome to his deposition of Pope John XII, a disorderly youth of twenty-five, "the most profligate if not the most guilty of all who have worn the tiara,"<sup>4</sup> and to his appointing the Pope in future; but Teutonic administration soon drove the populace to repeated revolt, quenched by massacre, till at length John returned, speedily to be slain by a wronged husband. Economic interest entered largely into the subsequent attempts of the Romans to choose their own Pope and rule their own city, and into the contrary claim of the emperors to do both; and in the nature of things the usually absent emperors could only spasmodically carry their point. The result was an epoch of riotous disorder in the papacy. Between John and Leo IX (955-1048) six popes were deposed, two murdered, and one mutilated;<sup>5</sup> and the Church was a mere battle-ground of the factions of the Roman and Italian nobility.<sup>6</sup> At last, in 1047, "a disgraceful contest between three claimants of the papal chair shocked even the reckless apathy of Italy";<sup>7</sup> and the emperor Henry III deposed them all and appointed a pope of his own choosing, the clergy again consenting. Soon, however, as before, the local claim was revived; and in the papacy of the powerful Gregory VII, known as Hildebrand, the head of the Church determinedly asserted its autonomy and his own autocracy. Then came the long "war of the investitures" between the popes and the emperors, in which the former were substantially the gainers. The result was, in addition

<sup>1</sup> Morin, p. 168. Compare, on the whole communal movement, Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ch. xxi, and Michelet.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, *Per. III*, § 46, *end*; Lea, i, 109, 218.

<sup>3</sup> Monastier, *Hist. of the Vauds*, ch. p. 32; Lea, i, 110.

<sup>4</sup> Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed. p. 134. See p. 135 for a list of John's offences; and cp. p. 85 as to other papal records. For a contemporary account of Pope Honorius II (d. 1130) see Milman, *Latin Christianity*, iii, 448-49.

<sup>5</sup> Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 174.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Müller, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, B. xiv, Cap. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Bryce, p. 152.

to the endless miseries set up by war, a systematic development of that financial corruption which already had been scandalous enough. The cathedral chapters and the nobles traded in bishoprics; the popes sold their ratifications for great sums; the money was normally borrowed by the bishops from the papal usurers; and there was witnessed throughout Europe the spectacle of the Church denouncing all usury as sin, while its own usurers were scrupulously protected, the bishops paying to them their interest from the revenues they were able to extort.<sup>1</sup> Satirical comment naturally abounded wherever men had any knowledge of the facts; and what current literature there was reflected the feeling on all sides.

The occurrence of the first and second crusades, the work respectively of Peter the Hermit and St. Bernard, created a period of new fanaticism, somewhat unfavourable to heresy; but even in that period the new sects were at work,<sup>2</sup> and in the twelfth century, when crusading had become a mere feudal conspiracy of conquest and plunder,<sup>3</sup> heresy reappeared, to be duly met by slaughter. A perfect ferment of anti-clerical heresy had arisen in Italy, France, and Flanders.<sup>4</sup> At Orvieto, in Italy, the heretics for a time actually had the mastery, and were put down only after a bloody struggle.<sup>5</sup> In France, for a period of twenty years from 1106, Peter de Brueys opposed infant baptism, the use of churches, holy crosses, prayers for the dead (the great source of clerical income), and the doctrine of the Real Presence in the eucharist (the main source of their power), and so set up the highly heretical sect of Petrobrussians.<sup>6</sup> Driven from his native district of Vallonise, he long maintained himself in Gascony, till at length he was seized and burned (1126 or 1130). The monk Henry (died in prison 1148) took a similar line, directly denouncing the clergy in Switzerland and France; as did Tanquelin in Flanders (killed by a priest, 1125); though in his case there seems to have been as much of religious hallucination as of the contrary.<sup>7</sup> A peasant, Eudo of Stella (who died in prison), is said to have half-revolutionized Brittany with his anti-ecclesiastical preaching.<sup>8</sup> The more famous monk Arnold of Brescia (strangled and burned in 1155), a pupil of Abailard, but orthodox in his theology and austere in his life, simplified his plan of reform (about 1139) into a proposal that the whole wealth of the clergy, from the pope

<sup>1</sup> "Janus," *The Pope and the Councils*, Eng. tr. pp. 178-79.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Heeren, *Essai sur l'influence des Croisades*, 1808, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Sir G. Cox, *The Crusades*, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Lea, i, 111.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Hardwick, p. 310; Lea, i, 68; Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 148-49; Mosheim, as last cited, § 7.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Mosheim, 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 7-9, and varior. notes; Monastier, pp. 33-41, 43-47; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, v, 384-90.



to the monks, should be transferred to the civil power, leaving churchmen to lead a spiritual life on voluntary offerings.<sup>1</sup> For fifteen years the stir of his movement lasted in Lombardy, till at length his formation of a republic at Rome forced the papacy to combine with the Emperor Frederick II, who gave Arnold up to death. But though his movement perished, anti-clericalism did not; and heretical sects of some kind persisted here and there, in despite of the Church, till the age of the Reformation. In Italy, during the age of the Renaissance, all alike were commonly called *paterini* or *patarini*—a nickname which seems to come from *pataria*, a Milanese word meaning "popular faction" or "rowdies."<sup>2</sup> Thus in the whole movement of fresh popular thought there is a manifest connection with the democratic movement in politics, though in the schools the spirit of discussion and dialectic had no similar relationship.

During the first half of the century its warfare with the emperors, and the frequent appointment of anti-popes, prevented any systematic policy on the part of the Holy See,<sup>3</sup> repression being mostly left to the local ecclesiastical authorities. It was in 1139 that Innocent II issued the first papal decree against Cathari, expelling them from the Church and calling on the temporal power to give full effect to their excommunication.<sup>4</sup> In 1163 Pope Alexander III, being exiled from Rome by Frederick I and the anti-pope Victor, called a great council at Tours, where again a policy of excommunication was decided on, the secular authorities being commanded to imprison the excommunicated and confiscate their property, but not to slay them. In the same year some Cathari arrested at Cologne had been sentenced to be burned; but the Council did not go so far. As a result the decree had little or no effect.<sup>5</sup>

So powerless was the Church at this stage that in 1167 the Cathari held a council of their own near Toulouse; a bishop of their order, Nicetas, coming from Constantinople to preside; and a whole system of French sees was set on foot.<sup>6</sup> So numerous had the Cathari now become that their highest grade, the *perfecti*, alone was reckoned to number 4,000;<sup>7</sup> and from this time it is of Cathari that we read in the rolls of persecution. About 1170 four more of them, from Flanders, were burned at Cologne; and others, of the

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, p. 267; Mosheim, as last cited, § 10; Monastier, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Hardwick, p. 204, note; Kurtz, i, 433. Cp. the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1875-76, pt. ii, p. 313; Mosheim, II Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 13, and note; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, v, 401. On the sects in general see De Potter, vi, 217-310; and Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, 1865, i, 149-53.

<sup>3</sup> Lea, i, 115.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 117-18.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> Kurtz, i, 435; Lea, i, 119.

<sup>7</sup> Hardwick, p. 308, note; Murdock's note to Mosheim, p. 426; Monastier, pp. 106-107.

higher grade called *boni homes* (= *boni homines*, "good men"), at Toulouse. In 1179, the heresy still gaining ground, an œcumenical council (the Third Lateran) was held at Rome under Pope Alexander III, decreeing afresh their excommunication, and setting up a new machinery of extirpation by proclaiming a crusade at once against the orderly heretics of southern France and the companies of openly irreligious freebooters who had arisen as a result of many wars and much misgovernment. To all who joined in the crusade was offered an indulgence of two years. In the following year Henry of Clairvaux, Cardinal of Albano, took the matter in hand as papal plenipotentiary; and in 1181 he raised a force of horse and foot and fell upon the ill-defended territory of the Viscount of Beziers, where many heretics, including the daughter of Raymond of Toulouse, had taken refuge. The chief stronghold was captured, with two Catharist bishops, who renounced their heresy, and were promptly given prebends in Toulouse. Many others submitted; but as soon as the terms for which the crusaders had enlisted were over and the army disbanded, they returned to their heretical practices.<sup>1</sup> Two years later an army collected in central France made a campaign against the freebooters, slaying thousands in one battle, hanging fifteen hundred after another, and blinding eighty more. But freebooting also continued.<sup>2</sup>

The first crusade against heresy having failed, it was left by the papacy for a number of years to itself; though anti-pope Lucius III in 1184 sought to set up an Inquisition; and in 1195 a papal legate held a council at Montpellier, seeking to create another crusade. The zeal of the faithful was mainly absorbed in Palestine; while the nobles at home were generally at war with each other. Heresy accordingly continued to flourish, though there was never any suspension of local persecution outside of Provence, where the heretics were now in a majority, having more theological schools and scholars than the Church.<sup>3</sup> In France in particular, in the early years of the reign of Philip Augustus (suc. 1180), many *paterini* were put to death by burning;<sup>4</sup> and the clergy at length persuaded the king to expel the Jews, the work being done almost as cruelly as it was two centuries later in Spain. In England, where there was thus far little heresy, it was repressed by Henry II. Some thirty rustics came from Flanders in 1166, fleeing persecution,

<sup>1</sup> Lea, i, 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 127-28.

<sup>4</sup> Kitchin, *History of France*, 4th ed. 1889, i, 286; citing *Chron. de St. Denis*, p. 350. The *Annales Victoriani* at Philip's death (1223) pronounce him *ecclesiarum et religionarum personarum amator et fautor* (Hénault's *Abrégé Chronologique*). Among the many Cathari put to death in his reign was Nicholas, the most famous painter in France—burned at Braine in 1204. Lea, i, 131.



and vainly sought to propagate their creed. Zealous to prove his orthodoxy in the period of his quarrel with Becket, Henry presided over a council of bishops called by him at Oxford to discuss the case; and the heretics were condemned to be scourged, branded in the face, and driven forth—to perish in the winter wilds. "England was not hospitable to heresy;" and practically her orthodoxy was "unsullied until the rise of Wiclif."<sup>1</sup>

In southern Europe and northern Italy in the last quarter of the century a foremost place began to be taken by the sect of the Waldenses, or Vaudois (otherwise the Poor Men of Lyons), which—whether deriving from ancient dissent surviving in the Vaux or Valleys of Piedmont,<sup>2</sup> or taking its name and character from the teaching of the Lyons merchant, Peter Waldus, or an earlier Peter of Vaux or Valdis<sup>3</sup>—conforms substantially to the general heretical tendencies of that age, in that it rejected the papal authority, contended for the reading of the Bible by the laity, condemned tithes, disparaged fasting, stipulated for poverty on the part of priests and denied their special status, opposed prayers for the dead, and preached peace and non-resistance. In 1199, at Metz, they were found in possession of a French translation of the New Testament, the Psalms, and the book of Job—a new and startling invasion of the priestly power in the west. Above all, their men and women alike went about preaching in the towns, in the houses, and in the churches, and administered the eucharist without priests.<sup>4</sup> Thus Cathari, Paterini, Manicheans, and non-Manichean Albigenses and Waldenses were on all fours for the Church, as opponents of its economic claims; and when at length, under Celestine III and Innocent III, the Holy See began to be consolidated after a long period of incessant change,<sup>5</sup> desperate measures began to be contemplated. Organized heresy was seen to be indestructible save by general extirpation; and on economic grounds it was not to be tolerated. At Orvieto the heresy stamped out with blood in 1125 was found alive again in 1150; was again put down in 1163 by

<sup>1</sup> Lea, i, 113-14. Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. tr. 1-vol. ed. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Hardwick, p. 312; Mosheim, 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 11, and notes in Reid's ed.; Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, Eng. tr. 1848, pp. 12-29; Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, pp. 28, 284, etc. As Vigilantius took refuge in the Cottian Alps, his doctrine may have survived there, as argued by Monastier (p. 10) and Faber (p. 290). The influence of Claudius of Turin, as they further contend, might also come into play. On the whole subject see Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 88.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mosheim with Faber, bk. iii, chs. iii, viii; Hardwick, as cited; and Monastier, pp. 53-82. Waddington, p. 353, holds Mosheim to be in error; and there are some grounds for dating the Waldensian heresy before Waldus, who flourished 1170-1180 (*id.* p. 354). Waldus had to flee from France, and finally died in Bohemia, 1197 (Kurtz, i, 439).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 73-88. Waldensian theology varied from time to time.

<sup>5</sup> Between 1153 and 1191 there were ten popes, three of them anti-popes. Celestine III held the chair from 1191 to 1198; and Innocent III from the latter year to 1216.

burning, hanging, and expulsion; and yet was again found active at the close of the century.<sup>1</sup> In 1198 Innocent III is found beginning a new Inquisition among the Albigenses; and in 1199, while threatening them with exile and confiscation,<sup>2</sup> he made a last diplomatic attempt to force the obstinately heretical people of Orvieto to take an oath of fidelity in the year 1199. It ended in the killing of his representative by the people.<sup>3</sup> The papacy accordingly laid plans to destroy the enemy at its centre of propagation.

#### § 4. Heresy in Southern France

In Provence and Languedoc, the scene of the first great papal crusade against anti-clerical heresy, there were represented all the then existing forces of popular freethought; and the motives of the crusade were equally typical of the cause of authority.

1. In addition to the Paulician and other movements of religious rationalism above noted, the Languedoc region was a centre of semi-popular literary culture, which was to no small extent anti-clerical, and by consequence somewhat anti-religious. The Latin-speaking jongleurs or minstrels, known as Goliards,<sup>4</sup> possessing as they did a clerical culture, were by their way of life committed to a joyous rather than an ascetic philosophy; and though given to blending the language of devotion with that of the drinking-table, very much after the fashion of Hafiz, they were capable of burlesquing the mass, the creed, hymns to the Virgin, the Lord's Prayer, confessions, and parts of the gospels, as well as of keenly satirizing the endless abuses of the Church.<sup>5</sup> "One is astonished to meet, in the Middle Ages, in a time always represented as crushed under the yoke of authority, such incredible audacities on the papacy, the episcopacy, chivalry, on the most revered dogmas of religion, such as paradise, hell, etc."<sup>6</sup> The rhymers escaped simply because there was no police that could catch them. Denounced by some of the stricter clergy, they were protected by others. They were, in fact, the minstrels of the free-living churchmen.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Potter, vi, 26; Lea, i, 115.

<sup>2</sup> Lea, i, 290.

<sup>3</sup> De Potter, vi, 28.

<sup>4</sup> See Bartoli, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, 1878, i, 262, note, also his *I Precursori del Rinascimento*, 1877, p. 37. In this section and in the next chapter I am indebted for various clues to the Rev. John Owen's *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*. As to the Goliards generally, see that work, pp. 38-45; Bartoli, *Storia*, cap. viii; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, bk. xiv, ch. iv; and Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 125-26. The name Goliard came from the type-name Goliath, used by many satirists.

<sup>5</sup> Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 271-79. Cp. Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 332, following Ratherius; and Gebhart, as cited. Milman (4th ed. ix, 189) credits the Goliards with "a profound respect for sacred things, and freedom of invective against sacred persons." This shows an imperfect knowledge of much of their work.

<sup>6</sup> C. Lenient, *La Satire en France au moyen âge*, 1859, pp. 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> Owen, as cited, pp. 43, 45; Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 293.



Of this type is Guiot of Provence, a Black Friar, the author of *La Bible Guiot*, written between 1187 and 1206. He is a lover of good living, a champion of aristocrats, a foe of popular movements,<sup>1</sup> and withal a little of a buffoon. But it is to be counted to him for righteousness that he thought the wealth devoured by the clergy might be more usefully spent on roads, bridges, and hospitals.<sup>2</sup> He has also a good word for the old pagans who lived "according to reason"; and as to his own time, he is sharply censorious alike of princes, pope, and prelates. The princes are rascals who "do not believe in God," and depress their nobility; and the breed of the latter has sadly degenerated. The pope is to be prayed for; but he is ill counselled by his cardinals, who conform to the ancient tendency of Rome to everything evil; many of the archbishops and bishops are no better; and the clergy in general are eaten up by greed and simony.<sup>3</sup> This is in fact the common note.<sup>4</sup>

A kindred spirit is seen in much of the verse alike of the northern Trouvères and the southern Troubadours. A modern Catholic historian of medieval literature complains that their compositions "abound with the severest ridicule of such persons and of such things as, in the temper of the age, were highly estimated and most generally revered," and notes that in consequence they were ranked by the devout as "lewd and impious libertines."<sup>5</sup> In particular they satirized the practice of excommunication and the use made by the Church of hell and purgatory as sources of revenue.<sup>6</sup> Their anti-clerical poetry having been as far as possible destroyed by the Inquisition, its character has to be partly inferred from the remains of the northern trouvères—e.g., Ruteboeuf and Raoul de Houdan, of whom the former wrote a *Voya de Paradis*, in which Sloth is a canon and Pride a bishop, both on their way to heaven; while Raoul has a *Songe d'enfer* in which hell is treated in a spirit of the most audacious burlesque.<sup>7</sup> In a striking passage of the old tale *Aucassin et Nicolette* there is naïvely revealed the spontaneous revolt against pietism which underlay all these flings of irreverence. "Into paradise," cries Aucassin, "go none but.....those aged priests,

<sup>1</sup> Disparagement of the serf is a commonplace of medieval literature. Langlois, *La Vie en France au moyen âge*, 1908, p. 169, and note; Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 96. At this point the semi-aristocratic jongleurs and the writers of bourgeois bias, such as some of the contributors to *Reynard the Fox*, coincided. The *Renart* stories are at once anti-aristocratic, anti-clerical, and anti-demotic.

<sup>2</sup> C. Lenient, *La Satire en France*, p. 115. Lenient cites from Erasmus's letters (Sept. 1, 1528) a story of a German burned alive in his time for venting the same idea.

<sup>3</sup> Langlois, as cited, pp. 30-68.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Langlois, pp. 107, 129, 263, etc. C. Lenient, as cited, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Joseph Berington, *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, ed. 1846, p. 229. Cp. Owen, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Owen, p. 43; Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 295, as to the French *fabliaux*.

<sup>7</sup> Labitte, *La divine comédie avant Dante*, in Charpentier ed. of Dante, pp. 133-34.

and those old cripples, and the maimed, who all day long and all night cough before the altars, and in the crypts beneath the churches; those.....who are naked and barefoot and full of sores.....Such as these enter in paradise, and with them have I nought to do. But in hell will I go. For to hell go the fair clerks and the fair knights who are slain in the tourney and the great wars, and the stout archer and the loyal man. With them will I go. And there go the fair and courteous ladies [of many loves]; and there pass the gold and the silver, the ermine and all rich furs, harpers and minstrels, and the happy of the world. With these will I go....."<sup>1</sup> It was such a temper, rather than reasoned unbelief, that inspired the blasphemous parodies in *Reynard the Fox* and other popular works of the Middle Ages.

The Provençal literature, further, was from the first influenced by the culture of the Saracens,<sup>2</sup> who held Sicily and Calabria in the ninth and tenth centuries, and had held part of Languedoc itself for a few years in the eighth. On the passing of the duchy of Provence to Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, at the end of the eleventh century, not only were the half-Saracenized Catalans mixed with the Provençals, but Raymond and his successors freely introduced the arts and science of the Saracens into their dominion.<sup>3</sup> In the Norman kingdom of Sicily too the Saracen influence was great even before the time of Frederick II; and thence it reached afresh through Italy to Provence,<sup>4</sup> carrying with it everywhere, by way of poetry, an element of anti-clerical and even of anti-Christian rationalism.<sup>5</sup> Though this spirit was not that of the Cathari and Waldenses, yet the fact that the latter strongly condemned the Crusades<sup>6</sup> was a point in common between them and the sympathizers with Saracen culture. And as the tolerant Saracen schools of Spain or the Christian schools of the same region, which copied their curriculum,<sup>7</sup> were in that age resorted to by youth from each of the countries of western Europe for scientific teaching<sup>8</sup>—all the

<sup>1</sup> *Aucassin and Nicolette*, tr. by Eugene Mason, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Sismondi, *Literature of Southern Europe*, Eng. tr. i, 74-95.

<sup>3</sup> Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, 1853, p. 152; Renan, *Averroès*, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> "The Troubadours in truth were freethinkers" (Owen, *Italian Skeptics*, p. 48). Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, ii, 2; and Hardwick, p. 274, note 4, as to the common animus against the papacy.

<sup>5</sup> Heeren, *Essai sur l'influence des Croisades*, French tr. 1808, p. 174, note; Owen, *Italian Skeptics*, p. 44, note.

<sup>6</sup> Abbé Queant, *Gerbert, ou Sylvestre II*, 1868, pp. 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> Sismondi, as cited, p. 82; Owen, pp. 66, 68; Mosheim, 11 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, § 4; 12 Cent. pt. ii, ch. i, § 9, and Reid's note to § 8; Hampden, Bampton Lectures, p. 446. The familiar record that Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II, studied in Spain among the Arabs (Ueberweg, i, 369) has of late years been discredited (Olleris, *Vie de Gerbert*, 1867, chs. ii and xxv; Ueberweg, p. 430; Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 88); but its very currency depended on the commonness of some such proceeding in his age. In any case, the teaching he would receive at the Spanish monastery of Borel would owe all its value to Saracen

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 76.



latest medical and most other scientific knowledge being in their hands—the influence of such culture must have been peculiarly strong in Provence.<sup>1</sup>

The medieval mystery-plays and moralities, already common in Provence, mixed at times with the normal irreverence of illiterate faith<sup>2</sup> a vein of surprisingly pronounced skeptical criticism,<sup>3</sup> which at the least was a stimulus to critical thought among the auditors, even if they were supposed to take it as merely dramatic. Inasmuch as the drama was hereditarily pagan, and had been continually denounced and ostracized by Fathers and Councils,<sup>4</sup> it would be natural that its practitioners, even when in the service of the Church, should be unbelievers.

The philosophy and science of both the Arabs and the Spanish Jews were specially cultivated in the Provence territory. The college of Montpellier practised on Arab lines medicine, botany, and mathematics; and the Jews, who had been driven from Spain by the Almohades, had flourishing schools at Narbonne, Beziers, Nîmes, and Carcassonne, as well as Montpellier, and spread alike the philosophy of Averroës and the semi-rational theology of the Jewish thinker Maimonides,<sup>5</sup> whose school held broadly by Averroism.

For the rest, every one of the new literary influences that were assailing the Church would tend to flourish in such a civilization as that of Languedoc, which had been peaceful and prosperous for over two hundred years. Unable to lay hold of the popular poets and minstrels who propagated anti-clericalism, the papacy could hope to put down by brute force the social system in which they flourished, crushing the pious and more hated heretic with the scoffer. And Languedoc was a peculiarly tempting field for such operations. Its relative lack of military strength, as well as its pre-eminence in heresy, led Innocent III, a peculiarly zealous assertor of the papal power,<sup>6</sup> to attack it in preference to other and remoter centres of enmity. In the first year of his pontificate, 1198,

culture. Cp. Abbé Queant, *Gerbert*, pp. 26–32. The greatness of the service he rendered to northern Europe in introducing the Arabic numerals is expressed in the legend of his magical powers. Compare the legends as to Roger Bacon.

<sup>1</sup> Sismondi, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. G. H. Lewes, *The Spanish Drama*, 1846, pp. 11–14; Littré, *Études sur les barbares et le moyen âge*, 3e édit. p. 356.

<sup>3</sup> See the passages cited by Owen, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Bartoli, *Storia*, pp. 200–202.

<sup>5</sup> Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance*, pp. 4, 17; Renan, *Averroës et l'Averroïsme*, pp. 145, 183, 185; Libri, *Hist. des sciences mathématiques en Italie*, i, 153; Michelet, *Hist. de France*, t. vii, *Renaissance*, introd. note du § vii; Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 382. Cp. Franck, *Études Orientales*, 1861, p. 357.

<sup>6</sup> As to the Pope's character compare Sismondi, *Hist. of the Crusades against the Albigenses* (Eng. tr. from vols. vi and vii of his *Histoire des Français*), p. 10; Hallam, *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 198; Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 6–8.

he commenced a new and zealous Inquisition<sup>1</sup> in the doomed region; and in the year 1207, when as much persecution had been accomplished as the lax faith of the nobility and many of the bishops would consent to—an appeal to the King of France to interfere being disregarded—the scheme of a crusade against the dominions of Raymond Count of Toulouse was conceived and gradually matured. The alternate weakness and obstinacy of Raymond, and the fresh provocation given by the murder, in 1208, of the arrogant papal legate, Pierre de Castelnau,<sup>2</sup> permitted the success of the scheme in such hands. The crusade was planned exactly on the conditions of those against the Saracens—the heretics at home being declared far worse than they.<sup>3</sup> The crusaders were freed from payment of interest on their debts, exempted from the jurisdiction of all law courts, and absolved from all their sins past or future.<sup>4</sup> To earn this reward they were to give only forty days' service<sup>5</sup>—a trifle in comparison with the hardships of the crusades to Palestine. "Never therefore had the cross been taken up with a more unanimous consent."<sup>6</sup> Bishops and nobles in Burgundy and France, the English Simon de Montfort, the Abbot of Cîteaux, and the Bernardine monks throughout Europe, combined in the cause; and recruits came from Austria and Saxony, from Bremen, even from Slavonia, as well as from northern France.<sup>7</sup> The result was such a campaign of crime and massacre as European history cannot match.<sup>8</sup> Despite the abject submission of the Count of Toulouse, who was publicly stripped and scourged, and despite the efforts of his nephew the Count of Albi to make terms, village after village was fired, all heretics caught were burned, and on the capture of the city and castle of Beziers (1209), every man, woman, and child within the walls was slaughtered, many of them in the churches, whither they had run for refuge. The legate, Arnold abbot of Cîteaux, being asked at an early stage how the heretics were to be distinguished from the faithful, gave the never-to-be-forgotten answer, "Kill all; God will know his own."<sup>9</sup> Seven thousand dead bodies were counted in the great church of St. Mary Magdalene. The legate in writing estimated the total quarry at

<sup>1</sup> As to previous acts of inquisition and persecution by Pope Alexander III (noted above) see Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquisition en Espagne*, French tr. 2e édit. i, 27–30, and Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 118. Cp. Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 69 (Amer. ed. ii, 564).

<sup>2</sup> Hardwick, p. 309; Lea, i, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Sismondi, *Crusades against the Albigenses*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> On the previous history of indulgences see Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 41–47; De Potter, *Esprit de l'Eglise*, vii, 22–39. For the later developments cp. Lea's *Studies in Church History*, 1869, p. 450; Vieusseux, *History of Switzerland*, 1840, pp. 121, 125.

<sup>5</sup> Sismondi, *Crusades*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>6</sup> For a modern Catholic defence of the whole proceedings see the Comte de Montalembert's *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie*, 13e édit. intr. pp. 35–40.

<sup>7</sup> Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 35, and refs.; Lea, i, 154.



15,000; others put the number at sixty thousand.<sup>1</sup> When all in the place were slain, and all the plunder removed, the town was burned to the ground, not one house being left standing. Warned by the fate of Beziers, the people of Carcassonne, after defending themselves for many days, secretly evacuated their town; but the legate contrived to capture a number of the fugitives, of whom he burned alive four hundred, and hanged fifty.<sup>2</sup> Systematic treachery, authorized and prescribed by the Pope,<sup>3</sup> completed the success of the undertaking. The Church had succeeded, in the name of religion, in bringing half of Europe to the attainment of the ideal height of wickedness, in that it had learned to make evil its good; and the papacy had on the whole come nearer to destroying the moral sense of all Christendom<sup>4</sup> than any conceivable combination of other causes could ever have done in any age.

According to a long current fiction, it was the Pope who first faltered when "the whole of Christendom demanded the renewal of those scenes of massacre" (Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 95); but this is disproved by the discovery of two letters in which, shortly before his death, he excitedly takes on himself the responsibility for all the bloodshed (Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii, introd. note to § iv). Michelet had previously accepted the legend which he here rejects. The bishops assembled in council at Lavaur, in 1213, demanded the extermination of the entire population of Toulouse. Finally, the papal policy is expressly decreed in the third canon of the Fourth General Council of Lateran, 1215. On that canon see *The Statutes of the Fourth General Council of Lateran*, by the Rev. John Evans, 1843. On the crusade in general, cp. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, bk. i, ch. iv; Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 89.

The first crusade was followed by others, in which Simon de Montfort reached the maximum of massacre, varying his procedure by tearing out eyes and cutting off noses when he was not hanging victims by dozens or burning them by scores or putting them to the sword by hundreds<sup>5</sup> (all being done "with the utmost joy")<sup>6</sup>; though the "White Company" organized by the Bishop of Toulouse<sup>7</sup> maintained a close rivalry. The Church's great difficulty was that as soon as an army had bought its plenary indulgence for all possible sin by forty days' service, it disbanded. Nevertheless, "the greater

<sup>1</sup> Sismondi, pp. 36-37, and refs.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 21, 41. Cp. p. 85 as to later treachery towards Saracens; and p. 123 as to the deeds of the Bishop of Toulouse. See again pp. 140-42 as to the massacre of Marmande.

<sup>3</sup> As to the international character of the crusade see Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Sismondi, p. 62 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Pp. 77, 78.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 37-43.

<sup>7</sup> Pp. 74, 75.

part of the population of the countries where heresy had prevailed was exterminated."<sup>1</sup> Organized Christianity had contrived to murder the civilization of Provence and Languedoc<sup>2</sup> while the fanatics of Islam in their comparatively bloodless manner were doing as much for that of Moorish Spain. Heresy indeed was not rooted out: throughout the whole of the thirteenth century the Inquisition met with resistance in Languedoc<sup>3</sup>; but the preponderance of numbers which alone could sustain freethinking had been destroyed, and in course of time it was eliminated by the sleepless engines of the Church.

It was owing to no lack of the principle of evil in the Christian system, but simply to the much greater and more uncontrollable diversity of the political elements of Christendom, that the whole culture and intelligence of Europe did not undergo the same fate. The dissensions and mutual injuries of the crusaders ultimately defeated their ideal<sup>4</sup>; after Simon de Montfort had died in the odour of sanctity<sup>5</sup> the crusade of Louis VIII of France in 1226 seems to have been essentially one of conquest, there being practically no heretics left; and the disasters of the expedition, crowned by the king's death, took away the old prestige of the movement. Meanwhile, the heresy of the Albigenses, and kindred ideas, had been effectually driven into other parts of Europe<sup>6</sup>; and about 1231 we find Gregory IX burning a multitude of them at the gates of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome<sup>7</sup> and compassing their slaughter in France and Germany.<sup>8</sup> In Italy the murderous pertinacity of the Dominicans gradually destroyed organized heresy despite frequent and desperate resistance. About 1230 we hear of one eloquent zealot, chosen podestà by the people of Verona, using his power to burn in one day sixty heretics, male and female.<sup>9</sup> The political heterogeneity of Europe, happily, made variation inevitable; though the papacy, by making the detection and persecution of heresy a means of gain to a whole order of its servants,

<sup>1</sup> P. 87. "The worship of the reformed Albigenses had everywhere ceased" (p. 115). Cp. p. 116 as to the completeness of the final massacres. It is estimated (Monastier, p. 115, following De la Mothe-Langon) that a million Albigenses were slain in the first half of the thirteenth century. The figures are of course speculative.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lea, ii, 159; Lenient, *La Satire en France au moyen âge*, 1859, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Lea, vol. ii, ch. i.

<sup>4</sup> Sismondi, pp. 115, 117.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 235-39; Lea, ii, 247, 259, 319, 347, 429, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Sismondi, p. 236; Llorente, as cited, i, 60-64; Lea, ii, 200.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Paris records that in 1249 four hundred and forty-three heretics were burned in Saxony and Pomerania. Previously multitudes had been burned by the Inquisitor Conrad, who was himself finally murdered in revenge. He was the confessor of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, and he taught her among other things, "Be merciful to your neighbour," and "Do to others whatsoever you would that they should do to you." See his praises recorded by Montalembert, as cited, vol. i, ch. x. Cp. Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 89 (ii, 567).

<sup>9</sup> Lea, ii, 204. This was the "peace-maker" described by Dr. Lea as—in that capacity—"so worthy a disciple of the Great Teacher of divine love" (i, 240).



had set on foot a machinery for the destruction of rational thought such as had never before existed.

It is still common to speak of the *personnel* of the Inquisition as disinterested, and to class its crimes as "conscientious." Buckle set up such a thesis, without due circumspection, as a support to one of his generalizations. (See the present writer's ed. of his *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England*, pp. 105-108, notes, and the passages in McCrie and Llorente there cited.) Dr. Lea, whose *History of the Inquisition* is the greatest storehouse of learning on the subject, takes up a similar position, arguing (i, 239): "That the men who conducted the Inquisition, and who toiled sedulously in its arduous, repulsive, and often dangerous labour, were thoroughly convinced that they were furthering the kingdom of God, is shown by the habitual practice of encouraging them with the remission of sins, similar to that offered for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land"—a somewhat surprising theorem. Parallel reasoning would prove that soldiers never plunder and are always Godly; that the crusaders were all conscientious men; and that policemen never take bribes or commit perjury. The interpretation of history calls for a less simple-minded psychology. That there were devoted fanatics in the Inquisition as in the Church is not to be disputed; that both organizations had economic bases is certain; and that the majority of office-bearers in both, in the ages of faith, had regard to gain, is demonstrated by all ecclesiastical history.

Dr. Lea's own *History* shows clearly enough (i, 471-533) that the Inquisition, from the first generation of its existence, lived upon its fines and confiscations. "Persecution, as a steady and continuous policy, rested, after all, upon confiscation.....When it was lacking, the business of defending the faith lagged lamentably" (i, 529). "But for the gains to be made out of fines and confiscations its [the Inquisition's] work would have been much less thorough, and it would have sunk into comparative insignificance as soon as the first frantic zeal of bigotry had exhausted itself" (pp. 532-33). Why, in the face of these avowals, "it would be unjust to say that greed and thirst for plunder were the impelling motives of the Inquisition" (p. 532) is not very clear. See below, ch. x, § 3, as to the causation in Spain. Cp. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, pp. 37, 44, 52. On the Inquisition in Portugal, in turn, Professor W. E. Collins sums up that "it was founded for reasons ostensibly religious but actually fiscal" (in the "Cambridge Modern History," vol. ii, *The Reformation*, ch. xii, p. 415). Every charge of economic motive that Catholicism can bring against Protestantism is thus balanced by the equivalent charge against its own Inquisition.

### § 5. Freethought in the Schools

The indestructibility of freethought, meanwhile, was being proved even in the philosophic schools, under all their conformities to faith. Already in the ninth century we have seen Scotus Erigena putting the faith in jeopardy by his philosophic defence of it. Another thinker, Roscelin (or Roussellin: fl. 1090), is interesting as having made a critical approach to freethought in religion by way of abstract philosophy. With him definitely begins the long academic debate between the Nominalists and Realists so called. In an undefined way, it had existed as early as the ninth century,<sup>1</sup> the ground being the Christian adoption of Plato's doctrine of ideas—that individual objects are instances or images of an ideal universal, which is a real existence, and prior to the individual thing: "*universalia ante rem*." To that proposition Aristotle had opposed the doctrine that the universal is immanent in the thing—"universalia in re"—the latter alone being matter of knowledge;<sup>2</sup> and in the Middle Ages those who called Aristotle master carried his negation of Plato to the extent of insisting that the "universal" or "abstract," or the "form" or "species," is a mere subjective creation, a name, having no real existence. This, the Nominalist position—mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle<sup>3</sup>—was ultimately expressed in the formula, "*universalia post rem*."

Such reasonings obviously tend to implicate theology; and Roscelin was either led or helped by his Nominalist training to deny either explicitly or implicitly the unity of the Trinity, arguing in effect that, as only individuals are real existences, the actuality of the persons of the Trinity involves their disunity.<sup>4</sup> The thesis, of course, evoked a storm, the English Archbishop Anselm and others producing indignant answers. Of Roscelin's writing only one letter is extant; and even Anselm, in criticizing his alleged doctrine, admits having gathered it only from his opponents, whose language suggests perversion.<sup>5</sup> But if the testimony of his pupil Abailard be truthful,<sup>6</sup> he was at best a confused reasoner; and in his theology he got no further than tritheism, then called ditheism.<sup>7</sup> Thus, though "Nominalism, by denying any objective reality to general notions, led the way directly to the testimony of the senses and the conclusions of experience,"<sup>8</sup> it did so on lines fatally

<sup>1</sup> Ueberweg, i, 366; Poole, pp. 99, 100.

<sup>2</sup> As to the verbal confusion of Aristotle's theory see Ueberweg.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* i, 160.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Mosheim's note, Reid's ed. p. 388.

<sup>5</sup> Poole, p. 104, note; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. i, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Hampden, Bampton Lectures, *On the Scholastic Philosophy*, 1848, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* i, 375.

<sup>8</sup> Ueberweg, i, 374.



subordinate to the theology it sought to correct. Roscelin's thesis logically led to the denial not only of trinity-in-unity but of the Incarnation and transubstantiation; yet neither he nor his opponents seem to have thought even of the last consequence, he having in fact no consciously heretical intention. Commanded to recant by the Council of Soissons in 1092, he did so, and resumed his teaching as before; whereafter he was ordered to leave France. Coming to England, he showed himself so little of a rebel to the papacy as to contend strongly for priestly celibacy, arguing that all sons of priests and all born out of wedlock should alike be excluded from clerical office. Expelled from England in turn for these views, by a clergy still anti-celibate, he returned to Paris, to revive the old philosophic issue, until general hostility drove him to Aquitaine, where he spent his closing years in peace.<sup>1</sup>

Such handling of the cause of Nominalism gave an obvious advantage to Realism. That has been justly described by one clerical scholar as "Philosophy held in subordination to Church-Authority";<sup>2</sup> and another has avowed that "the spirit of Realism was essentially the spirit of dogmatism, the disposition to pronounce that truth was already known," while "Nominalism was essentially the spirit of progress, of inquiry, of criticism."<sup>3</sup> But even a critical philosophy may be made to capitulate to authority, as even à priori metaphysic may be to a certain extent turned against it. Realism had been markedly heretical in the hands of John Scotus; and in a later age the Realist John Huss was condemned to death—perhaps on political grounds, but not without signs of sectarian hate—by a majority of Nominalists at the Council of Constance. Everything depended on the force of the individual thinker and the degree of restraint put upon him by the authoritarian environment.<sup>4</sup> The world has even seen the spectacle of a professed indifferentist justifying the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and the Platonist Marsilio Ficino vilified Savonarola, basely enough, after his execution, adjusting a pantheistic Christianity to the needs of the political situation in Medicean Florence. Valid freethinking is a matter of thoroughness and rectitude, not of mere theoretic assents.

Tried by that test, the Nominalism of the medieval schools was no very potent emancipator of the human spirit, no very clear herald

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, as cited, and refs.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, 1862, p. 111. Farrar adds: "'Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam' are the words of the Realist Anselm (Prolog. i, 43, ed. Gerberon): 'Dubitando ad inquisitionem venimus; inquirendo veritatem percipimus' are those of the Nominalist Abailard (*Sic et Non*, p. 16, ed. Cousin)."

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, ch. 19, as to orthodoxy among both Nominalists and Realists.

of freedom or new concrete truth. A doctrine which was so far adjusted to authority as to affirm the unquestionable existence of three deities, Father, Son, and Spirit, and merely disputed the not more supra-rational theorem of their unity, yielded to the rival philosophy a superiority in the kind of credit it sought for itself. Nominalism was thus "driven to the shade of the schools," where it was "regarded entirely in a logical point of view, and by no means in its actual philosophic importance as a speculation concerning the grounds of human knowledge."<sup>1</sup> For Roscelin himself the question was one of dialectics, not of faith, and he made no practical rationalists. The popular heresies bit rather deeper into life.<sup>2</sup>

It is doubtless true of the Paulicians that "there was no principle of development in their creed: it reflected no genuine freedom of thought" (Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 95); but the same thing, as we have seen, is clearly true of scholasticism itself. It may indeed be urged that "the contest between Ratramn and Paschase on the doctrine of the Eucharist; of Lanfranc with Berengar on the same subject; of Anselm with Roscelin on the nature of Universals; the complaints of Bernard against the dialectical theology of Abelard; are all illustrations of the collision between Reason and Authority.....varied forms of rationalism—the pure exertions of the mind within itself.....against the constringent force of the Spiritual government" (Hampden, *Bampton Lectures on The Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. p. 37; cp. Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 203); but none of the scholastics ever professed to set Authority aside. None dared. John Scotus indeed affirmed the identity of true religion with true philosophy, without professing to subordinate the latter; but the most eminent of the later scholastics affirmed such a subordination. "The vassalage of philosophy consisted in the fact that an impassable limit was fixed for the freedom of philosophizing in the dogmas of the Church" (Ueberweg, i, 357); and some of the chief dogmas were not allowed to be philosophically discussed; though, "with its territory thus limited, philosophy was indeed allowed by theology a freedom which was rarely and only by exception infringed upon" (*ib.* Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 151). "The suspicion of originality was fatal to the reputation of the scholastic divine" (Hampden, pp. 46–47). The popular heresy, indeed, lacked the intellectual stimulus that came to the schools from the philosophy of Averroës; but it was the hardier movement of the two.

Already in the eleventh century, however, the simple fact of the production of a new argument for the existence of God by Anselm,

<sup>1</sup> Hampden, pp. 70, 449.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, iii, 550.



Archbishop of Canterbury, is a proof that, apart from the published disputes, a measure of doubt on the fundamental issue had arisen in the schools. It is urged<sup>1</sup> that, though the argumentation of Anselm seems alien to the thought of his time, there is no proof that the idea of proving the existence of God was in any way pressed on him from the outside. It is, however, inconceivable that such an argument should be framed if no one had raised a doubt. And as a matter of fact the question *was* discussed in the schools, Anselm's treatise being a reproduction of his teaching. The monks of Bec, where he taught, urged him to write a treatise wherein nothing should be proved by mere authority, but all by necessity of reason or evidence of truth, and with an eye to objections of all sorts.<sup>2</sup> In the preface to his *Cur Deus Homo*, again, he says that his first book is an answer to the objections of infidels who reject Christianity as irrational.<sup>3</sup> Further, the nature of part of Anselm's theistic argument and the very able but friendly reply of Gaunilo (a Count of Montigni, who entered a convent near Tours, 1044-1083) show that the subject was within the range of private discussion. Anselm substantially follows St. Augustine;<sup>4</sup> and men cannot have read the ancient books which so often spoke of atheism without confronting the atheistic idea. It is not to be supposed that Gaunilo was an unbeliever; but his argumentation is that of a man who had pondered the problem.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the ostensibly rationalistic nature of his argument, however, Anselm stipulated for absolute submission of the intellect to the creed of the Church;<sup>6</sup> so that the original subtitle of his *Proslogium*, *Fides quaerens intellectum*, in no way admits rational tests. In the next century we meet with new evidence of sporadic unbelief, and new attempts to deal with it on the philosophic side. John of Salisbury (1120-1180) tells of having heard many discourse on physics "otherwise than faith may hold";<sup>7</sup> and the same vivacious scholar put in his list of "things about which a wise man may doubt, so.....that the doubt extend not to the multitude," some "things which are reverently to be inquired about God himself."<sup>8</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis (1147-1223), whose abundant and credulous gossip throws so much light on the inner life of the Church and the

<sup>1</sup> Poole, *Illustr. of the Hist. of Medieval Thought*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>2</sup> *Præfatio in Monologium*.

<sup>3</sup> As to the various classes of doubters known to Anselm see Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 129-31, and refs. Anselm writes: *Fides enim nostra contra impios ratione defendenda est*. Epist. ii, 41.

<sup>4</sup> See it in Ueberweg, i, 384-85; cp. Ch. de Rémusat, *Saint Anselme*, 1853, pp. 61-62; Dean Church, *Saint Anselm*, ed. 1888, pp. 86-87. As to previous instances of Anselm's argument cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 338 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Cited by Hampden, Bampton Lect. p. 443.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Ueberweg, i, 379-80.

<sup>7</sup> *Metaphysicus*, vii, 2; Poole, p. 223.

laity in his age, tells that the learned Simon of Tournay "thought not soundly on the articles of the faith," saying privately, to his intimates, things that he dared not utter publicly, till one day, in a passion, he cried out, "Almighty God! how long shall this superstitious sect of Christians and this upstart invention endure?"; whereupon during the night he lost the power of speech, and remained helpless till his death.<sup>1</sup> Other ecclesiastical chroniclers represent Simon as deriding alike Jesus, Moses, and Mahomet—an ascription to him of the "three impostors" formula.<sup>2</sup> Again, Giraldus tells how an unnamed priest, reproved by another for careless celebration of the mass, angrily asked whether his rebuker really believed in transubstantiation, in the incarnation, in the Virgin Birth, and in resurrection; adding that it was all carried on by hypocrites, and assuredly invented by cunning ancients to hold men in terror and restraint. And Giraldus comments that *inter nos* there are many who so think in secret.<sup>3</sup> As his own picture of the Church exhibits a gross and almost universal rapacity pervading it from the highest clergy to the lowest, the statement is entirely credible.<sup>4</sup> Yet again, in the Romance of the Holy Grail, mention is twice made of clerical doubters on the doctrine of the Trinity;<sup>5</sup> and on that side, in the crusading period, both the monotheistic doctrine of Islam and the Arab philosophy of Averroës were likely to set up a certain amount of skepticism. In the twelfth century, accordingly, we have Nicolas of Amiens producing his tractate *De articulis* (or *arte*) *catholicæ fidei* in the hope of convincing by his arguments men "who disdain to believe the prophecies and the gospel."<sup>6</sup>

To meet such skepticism too was one of the undertakings of the renowned ABAILARD (1079-1142), himself persecuted as a heretic for the arguments with which he sought to guard against unbelief. Of the details of his early life it concerns us here to note only that he studied under Roscelin, and swerved somewhat in philosophy from his master's theoretic Nominalism, which he partly modified on Aristotelian lines, though knowing little of Aristotle.<sup>7</sup> After his retirement from the world to the cloister, he was induced to resume philosophic teaching; and his pupils, like those of Anselm, begged their master to give them rational arguments on the main points of

<sup>1</sup> *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, Distinctio i, c. 51; Works, ed. Brewer, Rolls Series, ii, 148-49; pref. p. xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie. II (1880), i, 61. Hauréau points out that Simon's writings are strictly orthodox, whatever his utterances may have been.

<sup>3</sup> *Distinctio*, ii, c. 24; pp. liv, 285.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Pearson, *Hist. of England during the Early and Middle Ages*, ii, 504.

<sup>5</sup> *The Saynt Graal*, ed. Furnivall, 1861, pp. 7, 84; *History of the Holy Grail*, ed. Furnivall, 1874, pp. 5-7; Pearson, as cited, i, 606-607.

<sup>6</sup> Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 1870, p. 502.

<sup>7</sup> Poole, pp. 141-42.



the faith.<sup>1</sup> He accordingly rashly prepared a treatise, *De Unitate et Trinitate divina*, in which he proceeded "by analogies of human reason," avowing that the difficulties were great.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon envious rivals, of whom he had made many by his arrogance as well as by his fame, set up against him a heresy hunt; and for the rest of his life he figured as a dangerous person. While, however, he took up the relatively advanced position that reason must prepare the way for faith, since otherwise faith has no certitude,<sup>3</sup> he was in the main dependent on the authority either of second-hand Aristotle<sup>4</sup> or of the Scriptures, though he partly set aside that of the Fathers.<sup>5</sup> When St. Bernard accused him of Arianism and of heathenism he was expressing personal ill-will rather than criticizing. Abailard himself complained that many heresies were current in his time<sup>6</sup>; and as a matter of fact "more intrepid views than his were promulgated without risk by a multitude of less conspicuous masters."<sup>7</sup> For instance, Bernard Sylvester (of Chartres), in his cosmology, treated theological considerations with open disrespect<sup>8</sup>; and William of Conches, who held a similar tone on physics,<sup>9</sup> taught, until threatened with punishment, that the Holy Ghost and the Universal Soul were convertible terms.<sup>10</sup> This remarkably rational theologian further rejected the literal interpretation of the creation of Eve; in science he adopted the Demokritean doctrine of atoms; and in New Testament matters he revived the old rationalistic heresy that the three Persons of the Trinity are simply three aspects of the divine personality—power, wisdom, and will—which doctrine he was duly forced to retract. It is clear from his works that he lived in an atmosphere of controversy, and had to fight all along with the pious irrationalists who, "because they know not the forces of nature, in order that they may have all men comrades in their ignorance, suffer not that others should search out anything, and would have us believe like rustics and ask no reason." "If they perceive any man to be making search, they at once cry out that he is a heretic." The history of a thousand years of struggle between reason and religion is told in those sentences.

<sup>1</sup> "Humanas ac philosophicas rationes requirebant; et plus quæ intelligi quam quæ dici possent efflagitabant" (*Historia calamitatum mearum*, ed. Gréard, p. 36).

<sup>2</sup> *Id. ib.*

<sup>3</sup> Ueberweg, i, 387.

<sup>4</sup> Ueberweg, i, 391. Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 111.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, i, 394-95.

<sup>6</sup> Hampden, Bampton Lect. pp. 420-21.

<sup>7</sup> Poole, p. 175. It is not impossible that, as Sismondi suggests (*Histoire des Français*, ed. 1823, v. 294-96), Abailard was persecuted mainly because of the dangerous anti-papal movement maintained in Italy for fifteen years (1139-1155) by his doctrinally orthodox pupil, Arnold of Brescia. But Hampden (p. 40), agreeing with Guizot (*Hist. de Civ. en Europe*; *Hist. mod.* Leçon 6), pronounces that "there was no sympathy between the efforts of the Italian Republics to obtain social liberty, and those within the Church to recover personal freedom of thought."

<sup>8</sup> Poole, pp. 117-23, 169.

<sup>9</sup> Ueberweg, i, 398.

<sup>10</sup> Poole, p. 173.

As to William's doctrines and writings see Poole, pp. 124-30, 346-59. His authorship of one treatise is only latterly cleared up. In the work which under the title of *Elementa Philosophiae* is falsely ascribed to Bede, and under the title *De Philosophia Mundi* to Honorius of Autun (see Poole, pp. 340-42, 347 sq.), but which is really the production of William of Conches, there occurs the passage: "What is more pitiable than to say that a thing is, because God is able to do it, and not to show any reason why it is so; just as if God did everything that he is able to do! You talk like one who says that God is able to make a calf out of a log. But *did* he ever do it? Either, then, show a reason why a thing is so, or a purpose wherefore it is so, or else cease to declare it so." Migne, *Patrolog. Latin.* xc, 1139. It is thus an exaggeration to say of Abailard, as does Cousin, that "il mit de côté la vieille école d'Anselme de Laon, qui exposait sans expliquer, et fonda ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui le rationalisme" (*Ouvr. inédits d'Abélard*, 1836, intr. p. ii).

Abailard was not more explicit on concrete issues than this contemporary—who survived him, and studied his writings. If, indeed, as is said, he wrote that "a doctrine is believed not because God has said it, but because we are convinced by reason that it is so,"<sup>1</sup> he went as far on one line as any theologian of his time; but his main service to freethought seems to have lain in the great stimulus he gave to the practice of reasoning on all topics.<sup>2</sup> His enemy, St. Bernard, on the contrary, gave an "immense impulse to the growth of a genuinely superstitious spirit among the Latin clergy."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Rashdall pronounces Abailard "incomparably the greatest intellect of the Middle Ages; one of the great minds which mark a period in the world's intellectual history"; and adds that "Abailard (a Christian thinker to the very heart's core, however irredeemable (*sic*) the selfishness and overweening vanity of his youth) was at the same time the representative of the principle of free though reverent inquiry in matters of religion and individual loyalty to truth." (*The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 56-57.) If the praise given be intended to exalt Abailard above John Scotus, it seems excessive.

On a survey of Abailard's theological teachings, a modern reader

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Poole, p. 153. It is difficult to doubt that the series of patristic deliverances against reason in the first section of *Sic et Non* was compiled by Abailard in a spirit of dissent.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Hardwick, p. 279; and see p. 275, note, for Bernard's dislike of his demand for clearness: "*Nihil videt per speculum et in ænigmate, sed facie ad faciem omnia intuetur.*"

<sup>3</sup> Poole, p. 161. Cp. Dr. Hastings Rashdall on the "pious scurrility" of Bernard. *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 57, note. Contrast the singularly laudatory account of St. Bernard given by two contemporary Positivists, Mr. Cotter Morison in his *Life and Times of St. Bernard*, and Mr. F. Harrison in his essay on that work in his *Choice of Books*. The subject is discussed in the present writer's paper on "The Ethics of Propaganda" in *Essays in Ethics*.



is apt to see the spirit of moral reason most clearly in one set forth in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, to the effect that Jesus was not incarnate to redeem men from damnation, but solely to instruct them by precept and example, and that he suffered and died only to show his charity towards men. The thesis was implicit if not explicit in the teaching of Pelagius; and for both men it meant the effort to purify their creed from the barbaric taint of the principle of sacrifice. In our own day, revived by such theologians as the English Maurice, it seems likely to gain ground, as an accommodation to the embarrassed moral sense of educated believers. But it is heresy if heresy ever was, besides being a blow at the heart of Catholic sacerdotalism; and Abailard on condemnation retracted it as he did his other Pelagian errors. Retraction, however, is publication; and to have been sentenced to retract such teaching in the twelfth century is to leave on posterity an impression of moral originality perhaps as important as the fame of a metaphysician. In any case, it is a careful judge who thus finally estimates him: "When he is often designated as the rationalist among the schoolmen, he deserves the title not only on account of the doctrine of the Trinity, which approaches Sabellianism in spite of all his polemics against it, and not only on account of his critical attempts, but also on account of his ethics, in which he actually completely agrees in the principal point with many modern rationalists."<sup>1</sup> And it is latterly his singular fate to be valued at once by many sympathetic Catholics, who hold him finally vindicated alike in life and doctrine, and by many freethinkers.

How far the stir set up in Europe by his personal magnetism and his personal record may have made for rational culture, it is impossible to estimate; but some consequence there must have been. John of Salisbury was one of Abailard's disciples and admirers; and, as we saw, he not only noted skepticism in others but indicated an infusion of it in his own mind—enough to earn for him from a modern historian the praise of being a sincere skeptic, as against those false skeptics who put forward universal doubt as a stalking horse for their mysticism.<sup>2</sup> But he was certainly not a universal skeptic<sup>3</sup>; and his denunciation of doubt as to the goodness and power of God<sup>4</sup> sounds orthodox enough. What he gained from Abailard was a concern for earnest dialectic.

The worst side of scholasticism at all times was that it was more

<sup>1</sup> Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. i, 325.

<sup>2</sup> Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i (1872), 534-46.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* citing the *Polycraticus*, i. vii, c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Polycraticus*, i. vii, c. 7.

often than not a mere logical expatiation *in vacuo*; this partly for sheer lack of real knowledge. John of Salisbury probably did not do injustice to the habit of verbiage it developed<sup>1</sup>; and the pupils of Abailard seem to have expressed themselves strongly to him concerning the wordy emptiness of most of what passed current as philosophic discourse; speaking of the teachers as blind leaders of the blind.<sup>2</sup> One version of the legend against Simon of Tournay is to the effect that, after demonstrating by the most skilful arguments the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, he went on to say, when enraptured listeners besought him to dictate his address so that it might be preserved, that if he had been evilly minded he could refute the doctrine by yet better arguments.<sup>3</sup> Heresy apart, this species of dialectical insincerity infected the whole life of the schools, even the higher spirits going about their work with a certain amount of mere logical ceremony.

#### § 6. Saracen and Jewish Influences

Even in the schools, however, over and above the influence of the more original teachers, there rises at the close of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth some measure of a new life, introduced into philosophy through the communication of Aristotle to the western world by the Saracens, largely by the mediation of the Jews.<sup>4</sup> The latter, in their free life under the earlier Moorish toleration, had developed something in the nature of a school of philosophy, in which the Judaic Platonism set up by Philo of Alexandria in the first century was blended with the Aristotelianism of the Arabs. As early as the eighth and ninth centuries, anti-Talmudic (the Karaïtes) and pro-Talmudic parties professed alike to appeal to reason<sup>5</sup>; and in the twelfth century the mere production of the *Guide of the Perplexed* by the celebrated Moses Maimonides (1130-1205)<sup>6</sup> tells of a good deal of practical rationalism (of the kind that reduced miracle stories to allegories), of which, however, there is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Poole, pp. 220-22; the extracts of Hampden, pp. 438-43; and the summing-up of Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i (1870), 357.

<sup>2</sup> *Historia calamitatum*, as cited. Cp. p. 10 for Abailard's own opinion of Anselm of Laon, whom he compares to a leafy but fruitless tree.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Paris, sub. ann. 1201. There is a somewhat circumstantial air about this story, Simon's reply being made to begin humorously with a *Jesule, Jesule!* Matthew, however, tells on this item the story of Simon's miraculous punishment which Giraldus tells on a quite different text. Matthew is indignant with the scholastic arrogance which has led many to "suppress" the miracle.

<sup>4</sup> Ueberweg, i, 419, 430; Hampden, p. 443 sq. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 173 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, i, 418. The Karaïtes may be described as Jewish Protestants or Puritans.

Cp. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 252-54.

<sup>6</sup> Schechter (as cited, pp. 197, 417) gives two sets of dates, the second being 1135-1204.



little direct literary result save of a theosophic kind.<sup>1</sup> Levi ben Gershom (1286-1344), commonly regarded as the greatest successor of Maimonides, is like him guardedly rationalistic in his commentaries on the Scriptures.<sup>2</sup> But the doctrine which makes Aristotle a practical support to rationalism, and which was adopted not only by Averroës but by the Motazilites of Islam—the eternity of matter—was rejected by Maimonides (as by nearly all other Jewish teachers, with the partial exception of Levi ben Gershom),<sup>3</sup> on Biblical grounds; though his attempts to rationalize Biblical doctrine and minimize miracles made him odious to the orthodox Jews, some of whom, in France, did not scruple to call in the aid of the Christian inquisition against his partisans.<sup>4</sup> The long struggle between the Maimonists and the orthodox is described as ending in the “triumph of peripatetism” or Averroism in the synagogue<sup>5</sup>; but Averroism as modified by Maimonides is only a partial accommodation of scripture to common sense. It would appear, in fact, that Jewish thought in the Saracen world retrograded as did that of the Saracens themselves; for we find Maimonides exclaiming over the apparent disbelief in *creatio ex nihilo* in the “Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great,” believed by him to be ancient, but now known to be a product of the eighth century.<sup>6</sup> The pantheistic teaching of Solomon ben Gebirol or Ibn Gebirol, better known as Avicbron,<sup>7</sup> who in point of time preceded the Arab Avempace, and who later acquired much Christian authority, was orthodox on the side of the creation dogma even when many Jews were on that head rationalistic.<sup>8</sup> The high-water mark, among the Jews, of the critical rationalism of the time, is the perception by Aben or Ibn Ezra (1119-1174) that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses—a discovery which gave Spinoza his cue five hundred years later; but Ibn Ezra, *liberioris ingenii vir*, as Spinoza pronounced him, had to express himself darkly.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the Jewish influence on Christian thought in the Middle Ages was chiefly metaphysical, carrying on Greek and Arab impulses; and to call the Jewish people, as does Renan, “the principal representative of rationalism during the second half of

<sup>1</sup> For a good survey of the medieval Hebrew thought in general see Joel, *Beiträge zur Gesch. der Philos.* 1876; and as to Maimonides see A. Franck's *Études Orientales*, 1861; Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie II, i, 41-46; and Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 177-82.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, pp. 422-23.

<sup>3</sup> Ueberweg, i, 428; Schechter, p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> Schechter, pp. 83-85.

<sup>5</sup> Hauréau pronounces (II, i, 29-34) that Avicbron should be ranked among the most sincere and resolute of pantheists. His chief work was the *Fons vite*.

<sup>6</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 100, 175.

<sup>7</sup> Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, c. 8, *ad init.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 208.

<sup>9</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 183.

the Middle Age” is to make too much of the academic aspects of freethinking. On the side of popular theology it is difficult to believe that they had much Unitarian influence; though Joinville in his *Life of Saint Louis* tells how, in a debate between Churchmen and Jews at the monastery of Cluny, a certain knight saw fit to break the head of one of the Jews with his staff for denying the divinity of Jesus, giving as his reason that many good Christians, listening to the Jewish arguments, were in a fair way to go home unbelievers. It was in this case that the sainted king laid down the principle that when a layman heard anyone blaspheme the Christian creed his proper course was not to argue, but to run the blasphemer through with his sword.<sup>1</sup> Such admitted inability on the part of the laity to reason on their faith, however, was more likely to accompany a double degree of orthodoxy than to make for doubt; and the clerical debating at the Abbey of Cluny, despite the honourable attitude of the Abbot, who condemned the knight's outrage, was probably a muster of foregone conclusions.

For a time, indeed, in the energetic intellectual life of northern France the spirit of freethought went far and deep. After the great stimulus given in Abailard's day to all discussion, we find another Breton teacher, AMAURY or Amalrich of Bène or Bena (end of twelfth century) and his pupil David of Dinant, partly under the earlier Arab influence,<sup>2</sup> partly under that of John the Scot,<sup>3</sup> teaching a pronounced pantheism, akin to that noted as flourishing later among the Brethren of the Free Spirit<sup>4</sup> and some of the Franciscan Fraticelli. Such a movement, involving disregard for the sacraments and ceremonies of the Church, was soon recognized as a dangerous heresy, and dealt with accordingly. The Church caused Amaury to abjure his teachings; and after his death, finding his party still growing, dug up and burned his bones. At the same time (1209) a number of his followers were burned alive; David of Dinant had to fly for his life;<sup>5</sup> and inasmuch as the new heresy had begun to make much of Aristotle, presumably as interpreted by Averroës, a Council held at Paris vetoed for the university the study alike of the pagan master and his commentators, interdicting first the *Physics* and soon after the *Metaphysics*.<sup>6</sup> This veto held until 1237, when

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Joinville*, ed. 1871, ii, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 222-24.

<sup>3</sup> Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, p. 435; Christlieb, *Leben und Lehre des Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1860, p. 438. Copies of John's writings were found in the hands of the sectaries of Amalrich and David; and in 1226 the writings in question were condemned and burnt accordingly. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 175.

<sup>4</sup> Ueberweg, i, 388, 431; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 112-14; Renan, p. 223; Hahn, *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter*, 1845-50, iii, 176-92.

<sup>5</sup> Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 12.

<sup>6</sup> Poole, p. 225; Ueberweg, i, 431.



the school which adapted the lore of Aristotle to Christian purposes began to carry the day.

The heretical Aristotelianism and the orthodox system which was to overpower it were alike radiated from the south, where the Arab influence spread early and widely. There, as we shall see, the long duel between the Emperor Frederick II and the papacy made a special opportunity for speculative freethought; and though this was far from meaning at all times practical enmity to Christian doctrine,<sup>1</sup> that was not absent. It is clear that before Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) a Naturalist and Averroïst view of the universe had been much discussed, since he makes the remark that "God is by some called *Natura naturans*"<sup>2</sup>—Nature at work—an idea fundamental alike to pantheism and to scientific naturalism. And throughout his great work—a marvel of mental gymnastic which better than almost any other writing redeems medieval orthodoxy from the charge of mere ineptitude—Thomas indicates his acquaintance with unorthodox thought. In particular he seems to owe the form of his work as well as the subject-matter of much of his argument to Averroës.<sup>3</sup> Born within the sphere of the Saracen-Sicilian influence, and of high rank, he must have met with what rationalism there was, and he always presupposes it.<sup>4</sup> "He is nearly as consummate a skeptic, almost atheist, as he is a divine and theologian," says one modern ecclesiastical dignitary;<sup>5</sup> and an orthodox apologist<sup>6</sup> more severely complains that "Aquinas presented.....so many doubts on the deepest points.....so many plausible reasons for unbelief.....that his works have probably suggested most of the skeptical opinions which were adopted by others who were trained in the study of them.....He has done more than most men to put the faith of his fellow-Christians in peril." Of course he rejects Averroïsm. Yet he, like his antagonist Duns Scotus, inevitably gravitates to pantheism when he would rigorously philosophize.<sup>7</sup>

What he did for his church was to combine so ingeniously the semblance of Aristotelian method with constant recurrence to the sacred books as to impose their authority on the life of the schools

<sup>1</sup> Lecky's description (*Rationalism in Europe*, ed. 1887, i, 48) of Averroïsm as a "stern and uncompromising infidelity" is hopelessly astray.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Theologica*, Prima Secundae, Quæst. LXXXV, Art. 6. Compare Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 189, for a trace of the idea of *natura naturans* in John Scotus and Heiric, in the ninth century.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, ii, 130.

<sup>4</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 133.

<sup>5</sup> Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 38-39. Compare Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, i, 264; and Maurice, *Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. pp. 188-90. It is noteworthy that the *Summa* of Thomas was a favourite study of Descartes, who read hardly any other theologian.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Milman, ix, 143.

no less completely than it dominated the minds of the unlearned. Meeting method with method, and showing himself well aware of the lore he circumvented, he built up a system quite as well fitted to be a mere gymnastic of the mind; and he thereby effected the arrest for some three centuries of the method of experimental science which Aristotle had inculcated. He came just in time. Roger Bacon, trained at Paris, was eagerly preaching the scientific gospel; and while he was suffering imprisonment at the hands of his Franciscan superiors for his eminently secular devotion to science, the freer scholars of the university were developing a heresy that outwent his.

Now, however, began to be seen once for all the impossibility of rational freedom in or under a church which depended for its revenue on the dogmatic exploitation of popular credulity. For a time the Aristotelian influence, as had been seen by the churchmen who had first sought to destroy it,<sup>1</sup> tended to be Averroïst and rationalist.<sup>2</sup> In 1269, however, there begins a determined campaign, led by the bishop of Paris, against the current Averroïst doctrines, notably the propositions "that the world is eternal"; "that there never was a first man"; "that the intellect of man is one"; "that the mind, which is the form of man, constituting him such, perishes with the body"; "that the acts of men are not governed by divine providence"; "that God cannot give immortality or incorruptibility to a corruptible or mortal thing."<sup>3</sup> On such doctrines the bishop and his coadjutors naturally passed an anathema (1270); and at this period it was that Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas wrote their treatises against Averroïsm.<sup>4</sup>

Still the freethinkers held out, and though in 1271 official commands were given that the discussion of such matters in the university should cease, another process of condemnation was carried out in 1277. This time the list of propositions denounced includes the following: "that the natural philosopher as such must deny the creation of the world, because he proceeds upon natural causes and reasons; while the believer (*fidelis*) may deny the eternity of the world, because he argues from supernatural causes"; "that creation is not possible, although the contrary is to be held according to faith"; "that a future resurrection is not to be believed by the philosopher, because it cannot be investigated by reason"; "that the teachings of the theologians are founded on fables"; "that there

<sup>1</sup> See the comments of Giraldus Cambrensis in the proem to his *Speculum Ecclesie* Brewer's ed. in Rolls Series, i, 9; and pref. pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 267, as to the polemic of William of Auvergne.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, pp. 567-68.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 269-71, and refs.



are fables and falsities in the Christian religion as in others"; "that nothing more can be known, on account of theology"; "that the Christian law prevents from learning";<sup>1</sup> "that God is not triune and one, for trinity is incompatible with perfect simplicity"; "that ecstatic states and visions take place naturally, and only so." Such vital unbelief could have only one fate; it was reduced to silence by a papal Bull,<sup>2</sup> administered by the orthodox majority; and the memory of the massacres of the year 1209, and of the awful crusade against the Albigenses, served to cow the thinkers of the schools into an outward conformity.

Henceforward orthodox Aristotelianism, placed on a canonical footing in the theological system of Thomas Aquinas, ruled the universities; and scholasticism counts for little in the liberation of European life from either dogma or superstition.<sup>3</sup> The practically progressive forces are to be looked for outside. In the thirteenth century in England we find the Franciscan friars in the school of Robert Grosst  te at Oxford discussing the question "Whether there be a God?"<sup>4</sup> but such a dispute was an academic exercise like another; and in any case the authorities could be trusted to see that it came to nothing. The work of Thomas himself serves to show how a really great power of comprehensive and orderly thought can be turned to the subversion of judgment by accepting the prior dominion of a fixed body of dogma and an arbitrary rule over opinion. And yet, so strong is the principle of ratiocination in his large performance, and so much does it embody of the critical forces of antiquity and of its own day, that while it served the Church as a code of orthodoxy its influence can be seen in the skeptical philosophy of Europe as late as Spinoza and Kant. It appears to have been as a result of his argumentation that there became established in the later procedure of the Church the doctrine that, while heretics who have once received the faith and lapsed are to be coerced and punished, other unbelievers (as Moslems and Jews) are not. This principle also, it would appear, he derived from the Moslems, as he did their rule that those of the true faith must avoid intimacy with the unbelievers, though believers firm in the faith may dispute with them "when there is greater expectation of the conversion of the infidels than of the subversion of the fidels." And to the rule of non-inquisition into the faith of Jews and Moslems

<sup>1</sup> Renan, pp. 273-75, and refs.; Ueberweg, i, 460, and refs.; Maywald, *Die Lehre von der zweifachen Wahrheit*, 1871, p. 11; Lange, i, 182 (tr. i, 218).

<sup>2</sup> Of John XXI, who had in 1276 condemned the doctrine of a twofold truth.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance*, pp. 29-44. And see above, p. 308.

<sup>4</sup> Berington, *Lit. Hist. of the Middle Ages*, p. 245. See above, p. 310.

the Church professed to adhere while the Inquisition lasted, after having trampled it under foot in spirit by causing the expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscoes from Spain.<sup>1</sup>

We shall perhaps best understand the inner life of the schools in the Middle Ages by likening it to that of the universities of our own time, where there is unquestionably much unbelief among teachers and taught, but where the economic and other pressures of the institution suffice to preserve an outward acquiescence. In the Middle Ages it was immeasurably less possible than in our day for the unbeliever to strike out a free course of life and doctrine for himself. If, then, to-day the scholarly class is in large measure tied to institutions and conformities, much more so was it then. The cloister was almost the sole haven of refuge for studious spirits, and to attain the haven they had to accept the discipline and the profession of faith. We may conclude, accordingly, that such works as Abailard's *Sic et Non*, setting forth opposed views of so many doctrines and problems, stood for and made for a great deal of quiet skepticism;<sup>2</sup> that the remarkable request of the monks of Bec for a ratiocinative teaching which should meet even extravagant objections, covered a good deal of resigned unfaith; and that in the Franciscan schools at Oxford the disputants were not all at heart believers. Indeed, the very existence of the doctrine of a "twofold truth"—one truth for religion and another for philosophy—was from the outset a witness for unbelief. But the unwritten word died, the *litera scripta* being solely those of faith, and liberation had to come, ages later, from without. Even when a bold saying won general currency—as that latterly ascribed, no doubt falsely, to King Alfonso the Wise of Castile, that "if he had been of God's council when he made the world he could have advised him better"—it did but crystallize skepticism in a jest, and supply the enemy with a text against impiety.

All the while, the Church was forging new and more murderous weapons against reason. It is one of her infamies to have revived the use in Christendom of the ancient practice of judicial torture,

<sup>1</sup> See the *Summa* of the Inquisitor Bartholom  us Fumus, Venet. 1554, s.v. INFIDELITAS, fol. 261, § 5; and the *Summa* of Thomas, *Secunda Secund  e*, Qu  st. X, Art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> It is sometimes described as a formidable product of doubt; and again by M. de R  musat as "consecrated to controversy rather than to skepticism." Cp. Pearson, *Hist. of England in the Early and Middle Ages*, 1867, i, 609. The view in the text seems the just mean. Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 57. In itself the book is for a modern reader a mere collection of the edifying contradictions of theologians; but such a collection must in any age have been a perplexity to faith; and it is not surprising that it remained unpublished until edited by Cousin (see the *Ouvrages in  dits*, intr. pp. clxxxv-ix). That writer justly sums up that such antinomies "condamnent l'esprit    un doute salutaire." The Rev. A. S. Farrar pronounces that "the critical independence of Nominalism, in a mind like that of Abailard, represents the destructive action of freethought, partly as early Protestantism, partly as skepticism" (*Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 12).



and this expressly for the suppression of heresy. The later European practice dates from the Bull of Innocent IV, *Ad extirpanda*, dated 1252. At first a veto was put on its administration by clerical hands; but in 1256 Alexander IV authorized the inquisitors and their associates to absolve one another for such acts. By the beginning of the fourteenth century torture was in use not only in the tribunals of the Inquisition but in the ordinary ecclesiastical courts, whence it gradually entered into the courts of lay justice.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to estimate the injury thus wrought at once to culture and to civilization, at the hands of the power which claimed specially to promote both.<sup>2</sup>

### § 7. Freethought in Italy

Apart from the schools, there was a notable amount of hardy freethinking among the imperialist nobles of northern Italy, in the time of the emperors Henry IV and V, the attitude of enmity to the Holy See having the effect of encouraging a rude rationalism. In 1115, while Henry V was vigorously carrying on the war of investitures begun by his father, and formerly condemned by himself, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany bequeathed her extensive fiefs to the papacy; and in the following year Henry took forcible possession of them. At this period the strife between the papal and the imperial factions in the Tuscan cities was at its fiercest; and the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani alleges that among many other heretics in 1115 and 1117 were some "of the sect of the Epicureans," who "with armed hand defended the said heresy" against the orthodox.<sup>3</sup> But it is doubtful whether the heresy involved was anything more than imperialist anti-papalism. Another chronicler speaks of the heretics as *Paterini*; and even this is dubious. The title of Epicurean in the time of Villani and Dante stood for an unbeliever in a future state;<sup>4</sup> but there was an avowed tendency to call all Ghibellines *Paterini*; and other heretical aspersions were likely to be applied in the same way.<sup>5</sup> As the Averroist philosophy had not yet risen, and rationalistic opinions were not yet current among the western Saracens, any bold heresy

<sup>1</sup> Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 421-22, 556-58, 575; U. Burke, *Hist. of Spain*, Hume's ed. 1900, ii, 351-52. For a detailed description of the methods of ecclesiastical torture, Burke refers to the treatise, *De Catholicis Institutionibus*, by Simancas, Bishop of Beja, Rome, 1575, tit. lxxv, *De Tormentis*, p. 491 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Torture was inflicted on witnesses in England in 1311, by special inquisitors, under the mandate of Clement V, in defiance of English law; and under Edward II it was used in England as elsewhere against the Templars.

<sup>3</sup> *Istorie fiorentine*, iv, 29.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 325.

<sup>5</sup> Villari, *Two First Centuries of Florentine History*, Eng. tr. 1901, pp. 110-12.

among the anti-papalists of Florence must be assigned either to a spontaneous growth of unbelief or to the obscure influence of the great poem of Lucretius, never wholly lost from Italian hands. But the Lucretian view of things among men of the world naturally remained a matter of private discussion, not of propaganda; and it was on the less rationalistic but more organized anti-clericalism that there came the doom of martyrdom. So with the simple deism of which we find traces in the polemic of Guibert de Nogent (d. 1124), who avowedly wrote his tract *De Incarnatione adversus Judæos* rather as an apology against unbelievers among the Christians;<sup>1</sup> and again among the pilgrim community founded later in France in commemoration of Thomas à Becket.<sup>2</sup> Such doubters said little, leaving it to more zealous reformers to challenge creed with creed.

Freethought in south-western Europe, however, had a measure of countenance in very high places. In the thirteenth century the Emperor Frederick II had the repute of being an infidel in the double sense of being semi-Moslem<sup>3</sup> and semi-atheist. By Pope Gregory IX he was openly charged, in a furious afterthought,<sup>4</sup> with saying that the world had been deceived by three impostors (*baratores*)—Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed; also with putting Jesus much below the other two, and with delighting to call himself the forerunner of Antichrist.

The Pope's letter, dated July 1, 1239, is given by Matthew Paris (extracts in Gieseler, vol. iii, § 55), and in Labbe's *Concilia*, t. xiii, col. 1157. Cp. the other references given by Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 296-97. As Voltaire remarks (*Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. lii), the Pope's statement is the basis for the old belief that Frederick had written a treatise dealing with Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed as *The Three Impostors*. The story is certainly a myth; and probably no such book existed in his century. Cp. Maclaine's note to Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. i, end; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 280-81, 295. The authorship of such a book has nevertheless been ascribed by Catholic writers successively to Averroès, Simon of Tournay, Frederick, his Minister, Pierre des Vignes, Arnaldo de Villanueva, Boccaccio, Poggio, Pietro Aretino, Machiavelli, Symphorien, Champier, Pomponazzi, Cardan, Erasmus, Rabelais, Ochinus, Servetus, Postel, Campanella, Muret, Geoffroi Vallée, Giordano Bruno, Dolet, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Vanini (cp. *Sentimens sur le traité des trois imposteurs* in the French ed. of

<sup>1</sup> Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, 164-66.

<sup>3</sup> The Moslems were inclined to regard him as of their creed "because educated in Sicily." Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, 1865, i, 66.

<sup>4</sup> See Gieseler, as cited below; and Reid's Mosheim, p. 437, note.



1793; and Lea, *Hist. of the Inquis.* iii, 560); and the seventeenth-century apologist Mersenne professed to have seen it in Arabic (Lea, iii, 297). These references may be dismissed as worthless. In 1654 the French physician and mathematician Morin wrote an *Epistola de tribus impostoribus* under the name of Panurge, but this attacked the three contemporary writers Gassendi, Neure, and Bernier; and in 1680 Kortholt of Kiel published under the title *De tribus impostoribus magnis* an attack on Herbert, Hobbes, and Spinoza. The *Three Impostors* current later, dealing with Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, may have been written about the same time, but, as we shall see later, is identical with *L'Esprit de Spinoza*, first published in 1719. A Latin treatise purporting to be written *de tribus famosissimis deceptoribus*, and addressed to an *Otho illustrissimus* (conceivably Otho Duke of Bavaria, 13th c.), came to light in MS. in 1706, and was described in 1716, but was not printed. The treatise current later in French cannot have been the same. On the whole subject see the note of R. C. Christie (reprinted from *Notes and Queries*) in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902, pp. 309, 315; and the full discussion in Reuter's *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung*, ii, 251-96. The book *De tribus impostoribus*, bearing the date 1598, of which several copies exist, seems to have been really published, with its false date, at Vienna in 1753.

Frederick was in reality superstitious enough; he worshipped relics; and he was nearly as merciless as the popes to rebellious heretics and Manicheans;<sup>1</sup> his cruelty proceeding, seemingly, on the belief that insubordination to the emperor was sure to follow intellectual as distinguished from political revolt against the Church. He was absolutely tolerant to Jews and Moslems,<sup>2</sup> and had trusted Moslem counsellors, thereby specially evoking the wrath of the Church. Greatly concerned to acquire the lore of the Arabs,<sup>3</sup> he gave his favour and protection to Michael Scotus, the first translator of portions of Averroës into Latin,<sup>4</sup> and presumptively himself a heretic of the Averroïst stamp; whence the legend of his wizardry, adopted by Dante.<sup>5</sup> Thus the doubting and persecuting emperor assisted at the birth of the philosophic movement which for centuries was most closely associated with unbelief in Christendom. For the

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vi, 150; Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Milman, vi, 150, 158.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 205-10. Michael Scotus may have been, like John Scotus, an Irishman, but his refusal to accept the archbishopric of Cashel, on the ground that he did not know the native language, makes this doubtful. The identification of him with a Scottish knight, Sir Michael Scott, still persisted in by some scholars on the strength of Sir Walter Scott's hasty note to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, is destitute of probability. See the Rev. J. Wood Brown's *Inquiry into the Life and Legend of Michael Scot*, 1897, pp. 160-61, 175-76.

<sup>5</sup> *Inferno*, xx, 515-17.

rest, he is recorded to have ridiculed the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, the viaticum, and other dogmas, "as being repugnant to reason and to nature";<sup>1</sup> and his general hostility to the Pope would tend to make him a bad Churchman. Indeed the testimonies, both Christian and Moslem, as to his freethinking are too clear to be set aside.<sup>2</sup> Certainly no monarch of that or any age was more eagerly interested in every form of culture, or did more, on tyrannous lines, to promote it;<sup>3</sup> and to him rather than to Simon de Montfort Europe owes the admission of representatives of cities to Parliaments.<sup>4</sup> Of his son Manfred it is recorded that he was a thorough Epicurean, believing neither in God nor in the saints.<sup>5</sup> But positive unbelief in a future state, mockery of the Christian religion, and even denial of deity—usually in private, and never in writing—are frequently complained of by the clerical writers of the time in France and Italy;<sup>6</sup> while in Spain Alfonso the Wise, about 1260, speaks of a common unbelief in immortality, alike as to heaven and hell; and the Council of Tarragona in 1291 decrees punishments against such unbelievers.<sup>7</sup> In Italy, not unnaturally, they were most commonly found among the Ghibelline or imperial party, the opponents of the papacy, despite imperial orthodoxy. "Incredulity, affected or real, was for the oppressed Ghibellines a way among others of distinguishing themselves from the Guelph oppressors."<sup>8</sup>

The commonest form of rationalistic heresy seems to have been unbelief in immortality. Thus Dante in the *Inferno* estimates that among the heretics there are more than a thousand followers of Epicurus, "who make the soul die with the body,"<sup>9</sup> specifying among them the Emperor Frederick II, a cardinal,<sup>10</sup> the Ghibelline noble Farinata degli Uberti, and the Guelph Cavalcante Cavalcanti.<sup>11</sup> He was thinking, as usual, of the men of his own age; but, as we have seen, this particular heresy had existed in previous centuries,

<sup>1</sup> Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 65-66; the Pope's letter, as cited; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 287-91, 296.

<sup>2</sup> See the verdict of Gieseler, Eng. tr. iii (1853), p. 103, note.

<sup>3</sup> Milman, vi, 158-59.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 154. Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, 1912, p. 382.

<sup>5</sup> G. Villani, *Istorie fiorentine*, vi, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. i, ch. ii, § 2, citing in particular Moneta's *Summa contra Catharos et Valdenses*, lib. V, cc. 4, 11, 15; Tempier (bishop of Paris), *Indiculus Errorum* (1272) in the *Bibliotheca Patrum Maxima*, t. xxv; Bulaeus, *Hist. Acad. Paris*, iii, 433—as to the Averroïsts at Paris, described above, p. 319. Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 230-31, citing William of Auvergne, and pp. 283, 285; Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 86, 101, 111-12; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaiss.* pp. 79-81; Lange, i, 182 (tr. i, 218); Sharon Turner, *Hist. of England during the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. v, 136-38.

<sup>7</sup> Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, iii, 560-61.

<sup>8</sup> Perrens, *La civilisation florentine du 13e au 16e siècle*, 1892, p. 101. Above, p. 322.

<sup>9</sup> *Inferno*, Canto x, 14-15, 118.

<sup>10</sup> Ottavio Ubaldini, d. 1273, of whom the commentators tell that he said that if there were such a thing as a soul he had lost his for the cause of the Ghibellines.

<sup>11</sup> As to whom see Renan, *Averroës*, p. 285, note; Gebhart, *Renaissance*, p. 81. His son Guido, "the first friend and the companion of all the youth of Dante," was reputed an atheist (*Decameron*, vi, 9). Cp. Cesare Balbo, *Vita di Dante*, ed. 1853, pp. 48-49. But see Owen, *Skeptics of the Ital. Renaiss.* p. 138, note.



having indeed probably never disappeared from Italy. Other passages in Dante's works<sup>1</sup> show, in any case, that it was much discussed in his time;<sup>2</sup> and it is noteworthy that, so far as open avowal went, Italian freethought had got no further two hundred years later. In the period before the papacy had thoroughly established the Inquisition, and diplomacy supervened on the tempestuous strifes of the great factions, there was a certain hardihood of speech on all subjects, which tended to disappear alongside of even a more searching unbelief.

"Le 16e siècle n'a eu aucune mauvaise pensée que le 13e n'ait eue avant lui" (Renan, *Averroès*, p. 231). Renan, however, seems astray in stating that "Le Poème de la Descente de Saint Paul aux enfers parle avec terreur d'une société secrète qui avait juré la destruction de Christianisme" (*id.* p. 284). The poem simply describes the various tortures of sinners in hell, and mentions in their turn those who "en terre, à sainte Iglise firent guerre," and in death "Verbe Deu refusouent"; also those "Ki ne croient que Deu fust nez (né), ne que Sainte Marie l'eust portez, ne que por le peuple vousist (voulait) mourir, ne que peine deignast soffrir." See the text as given by Ozanam, *Dante*, ed. 6ième, Ptie. iv—the version cited by Renan.

So, with regard to the belief in magic, there was no general advance in the later Renaissance on the skepticism of Pietro of Abano, a famous Paduan physician and Averroist, who died, at the age of 80, in 1305. He appears to have denied alike magic and miracles, though he held fast by astrology, and ascribed the rise and progress of all religions to the influence of the stars. Himself accused of magic, he escaped violent death by dying naturally before his trial was ended; and the Inquisition burned either his body or his image.<sup>3</sup> After him, superstition seems to have gone step for step with skepticism.

Dante's own poetic genius, indeed, did much to arrest intellectual evolution in Italy. Before his time, as we have seen, the trouvères of northern France and the Goliards of the south had handled hell in a spirit of burlesque; and his own teacher, Brunetto Latini, had framed a poetic allegory, *Il Tesoretto*, in which Nature figures as the universal power, behind which the God-idea disappeared.<sup>4</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> In the *Convito*, ii, 9, he writes that, "among all the bestialities, that is the most foolish, the most vile, the most damnable, which believes no other life to be after this life." Another passage (iv, 5) heaps curses on the "most foolish and vile beasts.....who presume to speak against our Faith."

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 111-12, as to anti-Christian movements.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 83, note; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 326-27; Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 177, and note 13 on p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Labitte, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, as cited, p. 139.

Dante's tremendous vision ultimately effaced all others of the kind; and his intellectual predominance in virtue of mere imaginative art is at once the great characteristic and the great anomaly of the early Renaissance. Happily the inseparable malignity of his pietism was in large part superseded by a sunnier spirit;<sup>1</sup> but his personality and his poetry helped to hold the balance of authority on the side of faith.<sup>2</sup> Within a few years of his death there was burned at Florence (1327) one of the most daring heretics of the later Middle Ages, CECCO STABILI D'ASCOLI, a professor of philosophy and astrology at Bologna, who is recorded to have had some intimacy with Dante, and to have been one of his detractors.<sup>3</sup> Cecco has been described as "representing natural science, against the Christian science of Dante";<sup>4</sup> and though his science was primitive, the summing-up is not unwarranted. Combining strong anti-Christian feeling with the universal belief in astrology, he had declared that Jesus lived as a sluggard (*come un poltrone*) with his disciples, and died on the cross, under the compulsion of his star.<sup>5</sup> In view of the blasphemer's fate, such audacity was not often repeated.

As against Dante, the great literary influence for tolerance and liberalism if not rationalism of thought was BOCCACCIO (1313-1375), whose *Decameron*<sup>6</sup> anticipates every lighter aspect of the Renaissance—its levity, its licence, its humour, its anti-clericalism, its incipient tolerance, its irreverence, its partial freethinking, as well as its exuberance in the joy of living. On the side of anti-clericalism, the key-note is struck so strongly and so defiantly in some of the opening tales that the toleration of the book by the papal authorities can be accounted for only by their appreciation of the humour of the stories therein told against them, as that<sup>7</sup> of the Jew who, after seeing the utter corruption of the clergy at Rome, turned Christian on the score that only by divine support could such a system survive. No Protestant ever passed a more scathing aspersion on the whole body of the curia than is thus set in the forefront of the *Decameron*. Still more deeply significant of innovating thought,

<sup>1</sup> Michelet argues that Italy was "anti-Dantesque" in the Renaissance (*Hist. de France*, vii, Intr. § 9 and App.), but he exaggerates the common disregard of the *Commedia*.

<sup>2</sup> As to an element of doubt, even in Dante, concerning Divine government, see Burckhardt, p. 497. But the attempt made by some critics to show that the "sins" to which Dante confessed had been intellectual—i.e., heresies—falls to the ground. See Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, Eng. tr. 1890, pp. 87-90; and cp. Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 144 sq. on the whole question.

<sup>3</sup> Cesare Balbo, *Vita di Dante*, ed. 1853, pp. 416-17, 433.

<sup>4</sup> Cantù, *Eretici d'Italia*, i, 153. Cantù gives an account of the trial process.

<sup>5</sup> G. Villani, x, 39. It is to be noted that the horoscope of Jesus was cast by several professed believers, as Albertus Magnus and Pierre d'Ailli, Cardinal and Bishop of Cambrai, as well as by Cardan. See Bayle, art. CARDAN, note Q; and cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 326.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Owen, pp. 128, 135-42; Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* i, 141-42; Milman, bk. xiv, ch. v, end.

<sup>7</sup> *Decam.* Gior. i, nov. 2.



however, is the famous story of *The Three Rings*,<sup>1</sup> embodied later by Lessing in his *Nathan the Wise* as an apologue of tolerance. Such a story, introduced with whatever parade of orthodox faith, could not but make for rational skepticism, summarizing as it does the whole effect of the inevitable comparison of the rival creeds made by the men of Italy and those of the east in their intercourse. The story itself, centring on Saladin, is of eastern origin,<sup>2</sup> and so tells of even more freethinking than meets the eye in the history of Islam.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that the Rabbi Simeon Duran (1360-1444), who follows on this period, appears to be the first Jewish teacher to plead for mutual toleration among the conflicting schools of his race.<sup>4</sup>

Current in Italy before Boccaccio, the tale had been improved from one Italian hand to another;<sup>5</sup> and the main credit for its full development is Boccaccio's.<sup>6</sup> Though the Church never officially attempted to suppress the book—leaving it to Savonarola to destroy as far as possible the first edition—the more serious clergy naturally resented its hostility, first denouncing it, then seeking to expurgate all the anti-clerical passages;<sup>7</sup> and the personal pressure brought to bear upon Boccaccio had the effect of dispiriting and puritanizing him; so that the *Decameron* finally wrought its effect in its author's despite.<sup>8</sup> So far as we can divine the deeper influence of such a work on medieval thought, it may reasonably be supposed to have tended, like that of Averroism, towards Unitarianism or deism, inasmuch as a simple belief in deity is all that is normally implied in its language on religious matters. On that view it bore its full intellectual fruit only in the two succeeding centuries, when deism and Unitarianism alike grew up in Italy, apparently from non-scholastic roots.

It is an interesting problem how far the vast calamity of the Black Death (1348-49) told either for skepticism or for superstition

<sup>1</sup> Gior. i, nov. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Marcus Landau, *Die Quellen des Dekameron*, 2te Aufl. 1884, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> The story is recorded to have been current among the Motecallemin—a party kindred to the Motazilites—in Bagdad. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 293, citing Dozy. Renan thinks it may have been of Jewish origin. *Id.* p. 294, note.

<sup>4</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 207-208.

<sup>5</sup> It is found some time before Boccaccio in the *Cento Novelle antiche* (No. 72 or 73) in a simpler form; but Landau (p. 183) thinks Boccaccio's immediate source was the version of Busone da Gubbio (b. 1280), who had improved on the version in the *Cento Novelle*, while Boccaccio in turn improved on him by treating the Jew more tolerantly. Bartoli (*I Precursori del Boccaccio*, 1876, pp. 26-28) disputes any immediate debt to Busone; as does Owen, *Skeptics of the Ital. Renais.* p. 29, note.

<sup>6</sup> Burckhardt (*Renaissance in Italy*, p. 493, note) points out that Boccaccio is the first to name the Christian religion, his Italian predecessors avoiding the idea; and that in one eastern version the story is used polemically against the Christians.

<sup>7</sup> Owen, p. 142, and refs.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* pp. 143-45. He was even so far terrorized by the menaces of a monk (who appeared to him to have occult knowledge of some of his secrets) as to propose to give up his classical studies; and would have done so but for Petrarch's dissuasion. Petrarch's letter (*Epist. Sent.* i, 5) is translated (Lett. xii) by M. Develay, *Lettres de Pétrarque à Boccace*.

in this age. In Boccaccio's immortal book we see a few refined Florentines who flee the pest giving themselves up to literary amusement; but there is also mention of many who had taken to wild debauchery, and there are many evidences as to wild outbreaks of desperate licence all over Europe.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, many were driven by fear to religious practices;<sup>2</sup> and in the immense destruction of life the Church acquired much new wealth. At the same time the multitudes of priests who died<sup>3</sup> had as a rule to be replaced by ill-trained persons, where the problem was not solved by creating pluralities, the result being a general falling-off in the culture and the authority of the clergy.<sup>4</sup> But there seems to have been little or no growth of such questioning as came later from the previously optimistic Voltaire after the earthquake of Lisbon; and the total effect of the immense reduction of population all over Europe seems to have been a lowering of the whole of the activities of life. Certainly the students of Paris in 1376 were surprisingly freethinking on scriptural points;<sup>5</sup> but there is nothing to show that the great pestilence had set up any new movement of ethical thought. In some ways it grievously deepened bigotry, as in regard to the Jews, who were in many regions madly impeached as having caused the plague by poisoning the wells, and were then massacred in large numbers.

Side by side with Boccaccio, his friend PETRARCH (1304-1374), who with him completes the great literary trio of the late Middle Ages, belongs to freethought in that he too, with less aggressiveness but also without recoil, stood for independent culture and a rational habit of mind as against the dogmatics and tyrannies of the Church.<sup>6</sup> He was in the main a practical humanist, not in accord with the verbalizing scholastic philosophy of his time, and disposed to find his intellectual guide in the skeptical yet conservative Cicero. The scholastics had become as fanatical for Aristotle or Averroës as the churchmen were for their dogmas;<sup>7</sup> and Petrarch made for mental freedom by resisting all dogmatisms alike.<sup>8</sup> The general liberality of his attitude has earned him the titles of "the first modern man"<sup>9</sup> and "the founder of modern criticism"<sup>10</sup>—both somewhat high-pitched.<sup>11</sup> He represented in reality the sobering and clarifying

<sup>1</sup> Gasquet, *The Great Pestilence*, 1893, pp. 28, 32, 37, and refs.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 11, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Probably 25,000 in England alone, including monks. *Id.* p. 204.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 205-208, 213, 216.

<sup>5</sup> Below, § 11.

<sup>6</sup> As to his anti-clericalism, cp. Gebhart, *Orig. de la Renais.* p. 71, and ref.; Owen, p. 113.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, i, 264.

<sup>8</sup> See the exposition of Owen, pp. 109-28, and refs. on p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 328.

<sup>10</sup> Mézières, *Pétrarque*, 1868, p. 362.

<sup>11</sup> It is to be noted that in his opposition to the scholastics he had predecessors. Cp. Gebhart, *Orig. de la Renais.* p. 65.



influence of the revived classic culture on the fanaticisms developed in the Middle Ages; and when he argued for the rule of reason in all things<sup>1</sup> it was not that he was a deeply searching rationalist, but that he was spontaneously averse to all the extremes of thought around him, and was concerned to discredit them. For himself, having little speculative power, he was disposed to fall back on a simple and tolerant Christianity. Thus he is quite unsympathetic in his references to those scholars of his day who privately indicated their unbelief. Knowing nothing of the teaching of Averroës, he speaks of him, on the strength of Christian fictions, as "that mad dog who, moved by an execrable rage, barks against his Lord Christ and the Catholic faith."<sup>2</sup> Apart from such conventional *odium theologicum*, his judgment, like his literary art, was clear and restrained; opening no new vistas, but bringing a steady and placid light to bear on its chosen sphere.

Between such humanistic influences and that of more systematic and scholastic thought, Italy in that age was the chief source of practical criticism of Christian dogmas; and the extent to which a unitarian theism was now connected with the acceptance of the philosophy of Averroës brought it about, despite the respectful attitude of Dante, who gave him a tranquil place in hell,<sup>3</sup> that he came to figure as Antichrist for the faithful.<sup>4</sup> Petrarch in his letters speaks of much downright hostility to the Christian system on the part of Averroëists;<sup>5</sup> and the association of Averroïsism with the great medical school of Padua<sup>6</sup> must have promoted practical skepticism among physicians. Being formally restricted to the schools, however, it tended there to undergo the usual scholastic petrification; and the common-sense deism it encouraged outside had to subsist without literary discipline. In this form it probably reached many lands, without openly affecting culture or life; since Averroïsism itself was professed generally in the Carmelite order, who claimed for it orthodoxy.<sup>7</sup>

Alongside, however, of intellectual solvents, there were at work others of a more widely effective kind, set up by the long and sinister

<sup>1</sup> Owen, p. 113. It is to be remembered that Dante also (*Convito*, ii, 8, 9; iii, 14; iv, 7) exalts Reason; but he uses the word in the old sense of mere mentality—the thinking as distinguished from the sensuous element in man; and he was fierce against all resort to reason as against faith. Petrarch was of course more of a rationalist. As to his philosophic skepticism, see Owen, p. 120. He drew the line only at doubting those things "in which doubt is sacrilege." Nevertheless he grounded his belief in immortality not on the Christian creed, but on the arguments of the pagans (Burckhardt, p. 546).

<sup>2</sup> *Epist. sine titulo*, cited by Renan, *Averroës*, p. 299. For the phrases put in Averroës' mouth by Christians, see pp. 294-98.

<sup>3</sup> *Inferno*, iv, 144.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 333-37; Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 176 and refs.

<sup>5</sup> Renan, pp. 326-27.

<sup>6</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 301-15.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 318-20.

historic episode of the Great Papal Schism. The Church, already profoundly discredited in the eleventh century by the gross disorders of the papacy, continued frequently throughout the twelfth to exhibit the old spectacle of rival popes; and late in the fourteenth (1378) there broke out the greatest schism of all. Ostensibly beginning in a riotous coercion of the electing cardinals by the Roman populace, it was maintained on the one side by the standing interest of the clergy in Italy, which called for an Italian head of the Church, and on the other hand by the French interest, which had already enforced the residence of the popes at Avignon from 1305 to 1376. It was natural that, just after the papal chair had been replaced in Italy by Gregory IX, the Romans should threaten violence to the cardinals if they chose any but an Italian; and no less natural that the French court should determine to restore a state of things in which it controlled the papacy in all save its corruption. During the seventy years of "the Captivity," Rome had sunk to the condition of a poor country town; and to the Italian clergy the struggle for a restoration was a matter of economic life and death. For thirty-nine years did the schism last, being ended only by the prolonged action of the great Council of Constance in deposing the rivals of the moment and appointing Martin V (1417); and this was achieved only after there had slipped into the chair of Peter "the most worthless and infamous man to be found."<sup>1</sup> During the schism every species of scandal had flourished. Indulgences had been sold and distributed at random;<sup>2</sup> simony and venality abounded more than ever;<sup>3</sup> the courts of Rome and Avignon were mere rivals in avarice, indecorum, and reciprocal execration; and in addition to the moral occasion for skepticism there was the intellectual, since no one could show conclusively that the administration of sacraments was valid under either pope.<sup>4</sup>

### § 8. Sects and Orders

Despite, therefore, the premium put by the Church on devotion to its cause and doctrine, and despite its success in strangling specific forms of heresy, hostility to its own pretensions germinated everywhere,<sup>5</sup> especially in the countries most alien to Italy in

<sup>1</sup> Justinger, cited in *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. tr. p. 298. <sup>2</sup> Hardwick, p. 357, note.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Bonnechese, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1844, i, 40-43.

<sup>4</sup> "Janus" (i.e. Döllinger), *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. 1869, pp. 292-95. This weighty work, sometimes mistakenly ascribed to Huber, who collaborated in it, was recast by commission and posthumously published as *Das Papstthum*, by J. Friedrich, München, 1892.

<sup>5</sup> Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 218; Lea, *Hist. of the Inquis.* i, 5-34; Gieseler, § 90 (ii, 572); Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, 4te Aufl. ii, 318-19.



language and civilization. An accomplished Catholic scholar<sup>1</sup> sums up that "from about the middle of the twelfth century the whole secular and religious literature of Europe grew more and more hostile to the papacy and the curia." The Church's own economic conditions, constantly turning its priesthood, despite all precautions, into a money-making and shamelessly avaricious class, ensured it a perpetuity of ill-will and denunciation. The popular literature which now began to grow throughout Christendom with the spread of political order was everywhere turned to the account of anti-clerical satire;<sup>2</sup> and only the defect of real knowledge secured by the Church's own policy prevented such hostility from developing into rational unbelief. As it was, a tendency to criticize at once the socio-economic code and practice and the details of creed and worship is seen in a series of movements from the thirteenth century onwards; and some of the most popular literature of that age is deeply tinged with the new spirit. After the overthrow of the well-organized anti-clericalism of the Cathari and other heretics in Languedoc, however, no movement equally systematic and equally heretical flourished on any large scale; and as even those heresies on their popular side were essentially supernaturalist, and tended to set up one hierarchy in place of another, it would be vain to look for anything like a consistent or searching rationalism among the people in the period broadly termed medieval, including the Renaissance.

It would be a bad misconception to infer from the abundant signs of popular disrespect for the clergy that the mass of the laity even in Italy, for instance, were unbelievers.<sup>3</sup> They never were anything of the kind. At all times they were deeply superstitious, easily swayed by religious emotion, credulous as to relics, miracles, visions, prophecies, responsive to pulpit eloquence, readily passing from derision of worldly priests to worship of austere ones.<sup>4</sup> When Machiavelli said that religion was gone from Italy, he was thinking of the upper classes, among whom theism was normal,<sup>5</sup> and the upper clergy, who were often at once superstitious and corrupt. As for the common people, it was impossible that they should be grounded rationalists as regarded the great problems of life. They

<sup>1</sup> *The Pope and the Council*, p. 220. For proofs see same work, pp. 220-34.

<sup>2</sup> "La satire est la plus complète manifestation de la pensée libre au moyen âge. Dans ce monde où le dogmatisme impitoyable au sein de l'Eglise et de l'école frappe comme hérétique tout dissident, l'esprit critique n'a pas trouvé de voie plus sûre, plus rapide et plus populaire, que la parodie" (Lenient, *La Satire en France au moyen âge*, 1859, p. 14).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Lenient, as cited, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> See in Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. i (*Age of the Despots*), ed. 1897, pp. 361-69, and Appendix IV, on "Religious Revivals in Medieval Italy." Those revivals occurred from time to time after Savonarola.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 138.

were merely the raw material on which knowledge might work if it could reach them, which it never did. And the common people everywhere else stood at or below the culture level of those of Italy.

For lack of other culture than Biblical, then, even the popular heresy tended to run into mysticisms which were only so far more rational than the dogmas and rites of the Church that they stood for some actual reflection. A partial exception, indeed, may be made in the case of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, a sect set up in Germany in the early years of the thirteenth century, by one Ortlieb, on the basis of the pantheistic teachings of Amaury of Bène and David of Dinant.<sup>1</sup> Their doctrines were set forth in a special treatise or sacred book, called *The Nine Rocks*. The *Fratres liberi spiritus* seem to have been identical with the sect of the "Holy Spirit";<sup>2</sup> but their tenets were heretical in a high degree, including as they did a denial of personal immortality, and consequently of the notions of heaven, hell, and purgatory. Even the sect's doctrine of the Holy Spirit was heretical in another way, inasmuch as it ran, if its opponents can be believed, to the old antinomian assertion that anyone filled with the Spirit was sinless, whatever deeds he might do.<sup>3</sup> As always, such antinomianism strengthened the hands of the clergy against the heresy, though the Brethren seem to have been originally very ascetic; and inasmuch as their pantheism involved the idea that Satan also had in him the divine essence, they were duly accused of devil-worship.<sup>4</sup> On general principles they were furiously persecuted; but all through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and even in the fifteenth, they are found in various parts of central and western Europe,<sup>5</sup> often in close alliance with the originally orthodox communities known in France and Holland by the names of *Turlupins* and *Beguins* or *Beguines*, and in Germany and Belgium as *Begutte* or *Beghards*,<sup>6</sup> akin to the Lollards.

These in turn are to be understood in connection with developments which took place in the thirteenth century within the Church—notably the rise of the great orders of Mendicant Friars, of which the two chief were founded about 1216 by Francis of Assisi and the Spanish Dominic, the latter a fierce persecutor in the Albigensian crusade. Nothing availed more to preserve or restore for a time the

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 90; Lea, *Hist. of Inquis.* ii, 319-20. <sup>2</sup> Kurtz, i, 435-36.

<sup>3</sup> Lea, i, 320-21. Cp. Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. tr. ii, 15-22; and Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 11, and notes. The doctrine of the treatise *De Novem Rupibus* is that of an educated thinker, and is in parts strongly antinomian, but always on pantheistic grounds.

<sup>4</sup> Lea, i, 323-24.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung*, ii, 240-49.

<sup>6</sup> Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 40-43, and notes; ch. v, § 9. The names *Beguin* and *Beghard* seem to have been derived from the old German verb *beggan*, to beg. In the Netherlands, *Beguine* was a name for women; and *Beghard* for men.



Church's prestige. The old criticism of priestly and monastic avarice and worldliness was disarmed by the sudden appearance and rapid spread of a priesthood and brotherhood of poverty; and the obvious devotion of thousands of the earlier adherents went to the general credit of the Church. Yet the descent of the new orders to the moral and economic levels of the old was only a question of time; and no process could more clearly illustrate the futility of all schemes of regenerating the world on non-rational principles. Apart from the vast encouragement given to sheer mendicancy among the poor, the orders themselves substantially apostatized from their own rules within a generation.

The history of the Franciscans in particular is like that of the Church in general—one of rapid lapse into furious schism, with a general reversion to gross self-seeking on the part of the majority, originally vowed to utter poverty. Elias, the first successor of Francis, appointed by the Saint himself, proved an intolerable tyrant; and in his day began the ferocious strife between the "Spirituals," who insisted on the founder's ideal of poverty, and the majority, who insisted on accepting the wealth which the world either bestowed or could be cajoled into bestowing on the order. The majority, of course, ultimately overbore the Spirituals, the papacy supporting them.<sup>1</sup> They followed the practically universal law of monastic life. The *Humiliati*, founded before the thirteenth century, had to be suppressed by the Pope in the sixteenth, for sheer corruption of morals; and the Franciscans and Dominicans, who speedily became bitterly hostile to each other, were in large measure little better. Even in the middle of the thirteenth century they were attacked by the Sorbonne doctor, William of St. Amour, in a book on *The Perils of the Latter Times*;<sup>2</sup> and in England in the fourteenth century we find Wiclif assailing the begging friars as the earlier satirists had assailed the abbots and monks. That all this reciprocal invective was not mere partizan calumny, but broadly true as against both sides, is the conclusion forced upon a reader of the *Philobiblon* ascribed to Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham and Treasurer and Chancellor under Edward III. In that book, written either by the bishop or by one of his chaplains, Robert Holkot,<sup>3</sup> the demerits of all orders of the clergy from the points of view of letters and morals are set forth with impartial emphasis;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the record in Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, bk. iii, chs. i-iii.

<sup>2</sup> Praised in the *Roman de la Rose*, Eng. vers. in Skeat's *Chaucer*, i, 244; Bell's ed. iv, 228. William was answered by the Dominican Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>3</sup> See Biog. Introd. to ed. of the *Philobiblon* by E. C. Thomas, 1893, pp. xliii-xlvi.

<sup>4</sup> C. 4, *Querimonia librorum contra clericos jam promotos*; C. 5, .....*contra religiosos possessionatos*; C. 6, .....*contra religiosos mendicantes*.

and the character of the bishop in turn is no less effectively disposed of after his death by Adam Murimuth, a distinguished lawyer and canon of St. Paul's.<sup>1</sup>

The worst of the trouble for the Church was that the mendicants were detested by bishops and the beneficed priests, whose credit they undermined, and whose revenues they intercepted. That the Franciscans and Dominicans remained socially powerful till the Reformation was due to the energy developed by their corporate organization and the measure of education they soon secured on their own behalf; not to any general superiority on their part to the "secular" clergy so-called.<sup>2</sup> Indeed it was to the latter, within the Church, that most pre-Reformation reformers looked for sympathy. At the outset, however, the movement of the Mendicant Friars gave a great impulsion to the lay communities of the type of the Beguines and Beghards who had originated in the Netherlands, and who practised at once mendicancy and charity very much on the early Franciscan lines;<sup>3</sup> and the spirit of innovation led in both cases to forms of heresy. That of the Beguines and Beghards arose mainly through their association with the Brethren of the Free Spirit; and they suffered persecution as did the latter; while among the "Spiritual" Franciscans, who were despisers of learning, there arose a species of new religion. At the beginning of the century, Abbot Joachim, of Flora or Flores in Calabria (d. 1202), who "may be regarded as the founder of modern mysticism,"<sup>4</sup> had earned a great reputation by devout austerities, and a greater by his vaticinations,<sup>5</sup> which he declared to be divine. One of his writings was condemned as heretical, thirteen years after his death, by the Council of Lateran; but his apocalyptic writings, and others put out in his name, had a great vogue among the rebellious Franciscans.

At length, in 1254, there was produced in Paris a book called *The Everlasting Gospel*, consisting of three of his genuine works, with a long and audacious Introduction by an anonymous hand, which expressed a spirit of innovation and revolt, mystical rather than rational, that seemed to promise the utter disruption of the

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Thomas, as cited, pp. xlvii-viii.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Mosheim, 13 C. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 18-40; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ch. vii, pt. 2; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaiss.* p. 42; Berington, *Lit. Hist. of the Middle Ages*, p. 244; Lea, *Hist. of Inq.* bk. iii, ch. i. The special work of the Dominicans was the establishment everywhere of the Inquisition. Mosheim, as last cited, ch. v, §§ 3-6, and notes; Lea, ii, 200-201; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 155-56; Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquis. en Espagne*, as cited, i, 49-55, 68, etc.

<sup>3</sup> As to the development of the Beguines from an original basis of charitable co-operation see Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii, 13; Lea, ii, 351.

<sup>4</sup> Lea, iii, 10.

<sup>5</sup> See the thirteenth-century memoirs of Fra Salimbene, Eng. tr. in T. K. L. Oliphant's *The Duke and the Scholar*, 1875, pp. 98, 103-104, 108-10, 116, 130.



Church. It declared that, as the dispensation of the Son had followed on that of the Father, so Christ's evangel in turn was to be superseded by that of the "Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the "Spiritual" section of the Franciscans, it brought heresy within the organization itself, the *Introduction* being by many ascribed—probably in error—to the head of the order, John of Parma, a devotee of Joachim. On other grounds, he was ultimately deposed;<sup>2</sup> but the ferment of heresy was great. And while the Franciscans are commonly reputed to have been led by small-minded generals,<sup>3</sup> their order, as Renan notes,<sup>4</sup> not only never lost the stamp of its popular and irregular origin, but was always less orthodox in general than the Dominican. But its deviations were rather ultra-religious than rational; and some of its heresies have become orthodoxy. Thus it was the Franciscans, notably Duns Scotus, who carried the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin against the Dominicans, who held by the teaching of Thomas Aquinas that she was conceived "in sin."<sup>5</sup> Mary was thus deified on a popular impulse, dating from paganism, at the expense of Christism; and, considering that both Thomas and St. Bernard had flatly rejected the Immaculate Conception, its ultimate adoption as dogma is highly significant.<sup>6</sup>

In the year 1260, when, according to the "Eternal Gospel," the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit was to begin, there was an immense excitement in northern Italy, marked by the outbreak of the order of Flagellants, self-scourgers, whose hysteria spread to other lands. Gherardo Segarelli, a youth of Parma, came forward as a new Christ, had himself circumcised, swaddled, cradled, and suckled;<sup>7</sup> and proceeded to found a new order of "Apostolics," after the manner of a sect of the previous century, known by the same name, who professed to return to primitive simplicity and to chastity, and reproduced what they supposed to be the morals of the early Church, including the profession of ascetic cohabitation.<sup>8</sup> Some of their missionaries got as far as Germany; but Segarelli was caught, imprisoned, reduced to the status of a bishop's jester, and at length,

<sup>1</sup> The *Introduction* to the book, probably written by the Franciscan Gerhard, made St. Francis the angel of Rev. xiv, 6; and the ministers of the new order were to be his friars. Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 33-36, and notes. Cp. Lea, as cited; and Hahn, *Gesch. der Ketzer im Mittelalter*, 1845-50, iii, 72-175—a very full account of Joachim's teaching. <sup>2</sup> Lea, iii, 20-25.

<sup>3</sup> Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xx, 230; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 155.

<sup>4</sup> Averroës, pp. 259-60.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Mosheim, 14 Cent. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5; and Burnet's *Letters*, ed. Rotterdam, 1686, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 75-76.

<sup>7</sup> Lea, iii, 104.

<sup>8</sup> Hardwick, p. 316; Lea, iii, 109; Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 14-16. A sect of Apostolici had existed in Asia Minor in the fourth century. Kurtz, i, 242. Cp. Lea, i, 109, note. Those of the twelfth century were vehemently opposed by St. Bernard.

after saving his life for a time by abjuration, burned at Parma, in the year 1300.

Despite much persecution of the order, one of its adherents, Fra Dolcino, immediately began to exploit Segarelli's martyrdom, and renewed the movement by an adaptation of the "Eternal Gospel," announcing that Segarelli had begun a new era, to last till the Day of Judgment. Predicting the formation of native states, as well as the forcible purification of the papacy, he ultimately set up an armed movement, which held out in the southern Alps for two years, till the Apostolics were reduced to cannibalism. At length (1307) they were overpowered and massacred, and Dolcino was captured, with his beautiful and devoted companion, Margherita di Trank. She was slowly burned to death before his eyes, refusing to abjure; and he in turn was gradually tortured to death, uttering no cry.<sup>1</sup>

The order subsisted for a time in secret, numbers cherishing Dolcino's memory, and practising a priestless and riteless religion, prohibiting oaths, and wholly repudiating every claim of the Church. Yet another sect, called by the name of "The Spirit of Liberty"—probably the origin of the name *libertini*, later applied to free-thinkers in France—was linked on the one hand to the Apostolics and on the other to the German Brethren of the Free Spirit, as well as to the Franciscan *Fraticelli*. This sect is heard of as late as 1344, when one of its members was burned.<sup>2</sup> And there were yet others; till it seemed as if the Latin Church were to be resolved into an endless series of schisms. But organization, as of old, prevailed; the cohesive and aggressive force of the central system, with the natural strifes of the new movements, whether within or without the Church, sufficed to bring about their absorption or their destruction. It needed a special concurrence of economic, political, and culture forces to disrupt the fabric of the papacy.

### § 9. Thought in Spain

Of all the chapters in the history of the Inquisition, the most tragical is the record of its work in Spain, for there a whole nation's faculty of freethought was by its ministry strangled for a whole era. There is a prevalent notion that in Spain fanaticism had mastered

<sup>1</sup> Lea, iii, 109-19.

<sup>2</sup> Lea, p. 121; Kurtz, i, 437; Hardwick, p. 315, note; Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, § 14, and note. See Dante, *Inferno*, xxviii, 55-60, as to Dolcino.

<sup>3</sup> Lea, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> As to the external movements connected with Joachim's *Gospel* see Mosheim, 13 Cent. pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 13-15. They were put down by sheer bloodshed. Cp. Ueberweg, i, 431; Lea, pp. 25-26, 86.



the national life from the period of the overthrow of Arianism under the later Visigothic kings; and that there the extirpation of heresy was the spontaneous and congenial work of the bulk of the nation, giving vent to the spirit of intolerance ingrained in it in the long war with the Moors. "Spain," says Michelet, "has always felt herself more Catholic than Rome."<sup>1</sup> But this is a serious misconception. Wars associated with a religious cause are usually followed rather by indifference than by increased faith; and the long wars of the Moors and the Christians in Spain had some such sequel,<sup>2</sup> as had the Crusades, and the later wars of religion in France and Germany. It is true that for a century after the (political) conversion of the Visigothic king Recared (587) from Arianism to Catholicism—an age of complete decadence—the policy of the Spanish Church was extremely intolerant, as might have been expected. The Jews, in particular, were repeatedly and murderously persecuted;<sup>3</sup> but after the fall of the Visigoths before the invading Moors, the treatment of all forms of heresy in the Christian parts of the Peninsula, down to the establishment of the second or New Inquisition under Torquemada, was in general rather less severe than elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

An exception is to be noted in the case of the edicts of 1194 and 1197, by Alfonso II and Pedro II ("the Catholic") of Aragon, against the Waldenses.<sup>5</sup> The policy in the first case was that of wholesale expulsion of the heretics anathematized by the Church; and, as this laid the victims open to plunder all round, there is a presumption that cupidity was a main part of the motive. Peter the Catholic, in turn, who decreed the stake for the heretics that remained, made a signally complete capitulation to the Holy See; but the nation did not support him; and the tribute he promised to pay to the Pope was never paid.<sup>6</sup> In the thirteenth century, when the Moors had been driven out of Castile, rationalistic heresy seems to have been as common in Spain as in Italy. Already Arab culture had spread, Archbishop Raymond of Toledo (1130–50) having caused many books to be translated from Arabic into Latin;<sup>7</sup> and inasmuch as racial warfare had always involved some intercourse between Christians and Moors,<sup>8</sup> the Averroist influence which so speedily reached Sicily from Toledo through Michael Scot must have counted for something in Spain. About 1260 Alfonso X, "the Wise" king of Castile, describes the heresies of his kingdom under

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. de France*, vol. x; *La Réforme*, ed. 1884, p. 333.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's notes to his ed. of Buckle (Routledge), 1904, pp. 539, 547.

<sup>3</sup> U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, Hume's ed. i. 109–10.

<sup>4</sup> McCrie, *Reformation in Spain*, ed. 1856, p. 41; Burke, as cited, ii. 55–56.

<sup>5</sup> Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i. 81.

<sup>7</sup> Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, ii. 54–55.

<sup>8</sup> Burke, i. 218.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* ii. 58.

two main divisions, of which the worse is the denial of a future state of rewards and punishments.<sup>1</sup> This heresy, further, is proceeded against by the Council of Tarragona in 1291. And though Alfonso was orthodox, and in his legislation a persecutor,<sup>2</sup> his own astronomic and mathematical science, so famous in the after times, came to him from the Arabs and the Jews whom he actually called in to assist him in preparing his astronomic tables.<sup>3</sup> Such science was itself a species of heresy in that age; and to it the orthodox king owes his Catholic reputation as a blasphemer, as Antichrist,<sup>4</sup> and as one of the countless authors of the fabulous treatise on the "Three Impostors." He would further rank as a bad Churchman, inasmuch as his very laws against heresy took no account of the Roman Inquisition (though it was nominally established by a papal rescript in 1235),<sup>5</sup> but provided independently for the treatment of offenders. Needless to say, they had due regard to finance, non-believers who listened to heresy being fined ten pounds weight of gold, with the alternative of fifty lashes in public; while the property of lay heretics without kin went to the fisc.<sup>6</sup> The law condemning to the stake those Christians who apostatized to Islam or Judaism<sup>7</sup> had also a financial motive.

Such laws, however, left to unsystematic application, were but slightly operative; and the people fiercely resisted what attempts were made to enforce them.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the thirteenth century the heresies of the French Beguines and the Franciscan "Spirituals" spread in Aragon, both by way of books and of preaching, and even entered Portugal. Against these, in the years 1314–1335, the Inquisitors maintained a persecution.<sup>9</sup> But it has been put on record by the famous Arnaldo of Villanueva—astronomer, scholar, alchemist, reformer, and occultist<sup>10</sup> (d. 1314)—whose books were at that period condemned by a council of friars because of his championship of the Spirituals, that King Frederick II of Aragon had confessed to him his doubts as to the truth of the Christian religion—doubts set up by the misconduct of priests, abbots, and bishops; the malignities of the heads of the friar orders; and the worldliness and political intrigues of the Holy See.<sup>11</sup> Such a king was not likely to be a zealous inquisitor; and the famous Joachite Franciscan Juan de Pera-Tallada (Jean de la Rochetaillade), imprisoned at Avignon for his apocalyptic teachings about 1349,

<sup>1</sup> Lea, iii. 560.

<sup>2</sup> Personally he discouraged heresy-hunting. Burke, ii. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Burke, i. 268–73; Dunham, *Hist. of Spain and Portugal*, 1832, iv. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Lea, iii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Burke, ii. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Lea, ii. 183.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* i. 221.

<sup>8</sup> Burke, ii. 66–67.

<sup>9</sup> Lea, iii. 85–86.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* pp. 52–53; McCrie, *Reformation in Spain*, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Bonet-Maury, *Les Précurseurs de la Réforme*, 1904, pp. 114–19.



seems to have died in peace in Spain long afterwards.<sup>1</sup> It cannot even be said that the ordinary motive of rapacity worked strongly against heresy in Spain in the Middle Ages, since there the Templars, condemned and plundered everywhere else, were acquitted; and their final spoliation was the work of the papacy, the Spanish authorities resisting.<sup>2</sup> We shall find, further, the orthodox Spanish king of Naples in the fifteenth century protecting anti-papal scholarship. And though Dominic, the primary type of the Inquisitor, had been a Castilian, no Spaniard was Pope from the fourth to the fourteenth century, and very few were cardinals.<sup>3</sup>

As late as the latter half of the fifteenth century, within a generation of the setting-up of the murderous New Inquisition, Spain seems to have been on the whole as much given to free-thinking as France, and much more so than England. On the one hand, Averroism tinged somewhat the intellectual life through the Moorish environment, so that in 1464 we find revolted nobles complaining that King Enrique IV is suspected of being unsound in the faith because he has about him both enemies of Catholicism and nominal Christians who avow their disbelief in a future state.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, it had been noted that many were beginning to deny the need or efficacy of priestly confession; and about 1478 a Professor at Salamanca, Pedro de Osma, actually printed an argument to that effect, further challenging the power of the Pope. So slight was then the machinery of inquisition that he had to be publicly tried by a council, which merely ordered him to recant in public; and he died peacefully in 1480.<sup>5</sup>

It was immediately after this, in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, that the Inquisition was newly and effectively established in Spain; and the determining motive was the avarice of the king and queen, not the Catholic zeal of the people. The Inquisitor-General of Messina came to Madrid in 1477 in order to obtain confirmation of a forged privilege, pretended to have been granted to the Dominicans in Sicily by Frederick II in 1233—that of receiving one-third of the property of every heretic they condemned. To such a ruler as Ferdinand, such a system readily appealed; and as soon as possible a new Inquisition was established in Spain, Isabella consenting.<sup>6</sup> From the first it was a system of plunder. "Men long dead, if they were represented by rich descendants, were cited before the tribunal, judged, and condemned; and the lands and goods that had descended to their heirs passed into the

<sup>1</sup> Lea, iii, 86.  
<sup>4</sup> Lea, iii, 564.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, ii, 57.  
<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii, 187-88.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ii, 62-63.  
<sup>6</sup> Lea, ii, 287; Burke, ii, 67-69.

coffers of the Catholic kings."<sup>1</sup> The solemn assertion by Queen Isabella, that she had never applied such money to the purposes of the crown, has been proved from State papers to be "a most deliberate and daring falsehood."<sup>2</sup> The revenue thus iniquitously obtained was enormous; and it is inferrible that the pecuniary motive underlay the later expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscoes as well as the average practice of the Inquisition.

The error as to the original or anciently ingrained fanaticism of the Spanish people, first made current by Ticknor (*Hist. Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. i, 505), has been to some extent diffused by Buckle, who at this point of his inquiry reasoned *a priori* instead of inductively as his own principles prescribed. See the notes to the present writer's edition of his *Introduction* (Routledge, 1904), pp. 107, 534-50. The special atrocity of the Inquisition in Spain was not even due directly to the papacy (cp. Burke, ii, 78): it was the result first of the rapacity of Ferdinand, utilizing a papal institution; and later of the political fanaticisms of Charles V and Philip II, both of Teutonic as well as Spanish descent. Philip alleged that the Inquisition in the Netherlands was more severe than in Spain (ed. of Buckle cited, p. 107, note). In the words of Bishop Stubbs: "To a German race of sovereigns Spain finally owed the subversion of her national system and ancient freedom" (*id.* p. 550, note).

Such a process, however, would not have been possible in any country, at any stage of the world's history, without the initiative and the support of some such sacrosanct organization as the Catholic Church, wielding a spell over the minds even of those who, in terror and despair, fought against it. As in the thirteenth century, so at the end of the fifteenth,<sup>3</sup> the Inquisition in Spain was spasmodically resisted in Aragon and Castile, in Catalonia, and in Valencia; the first Inquisitor-General in Aragon being actually slain in the cathedral of Saragossa in 1487, despite his precaution of wearing a steel cap and coat of mail.<sup>4</sup> Vigorous protests from the Cortès even forced some restraint upon the entire machine; but such occasional resistance could not long countervail the steady pressure of regal and official avarice and the systematic fanaticism of the Dominican order.

It was thus the fate of Spain to illustrate once for all the power of a dogmatic religious system to extirpate the spirit of reason from

<sup>1</sup> Burke, ii, 77, citing Lafuente, ix, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* citing Bergenroth, *Calendar*, etc. i, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Even as late as 1591, in Aragon, when in a riot against the Inquisition the Inquisitors barely escaped with their lives. Burke, ii, 80, note.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 81-82.



an entire nation for a whole era. There and there only, save for a time in Italy, did the Inquisition become all-powerful; and it wrought for the evisceration of the intellectual and material life of Spain with a demented zeal to which there is no parallel in later history. In the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, after several random massacres and much persecution of the "New Christians" or doubtful converts from Judaism,<sup>1</sup> the unconverted Jews of Spain were in 1489 penned into Ghettos, and were in 1492 expelled bodily from the country, with every circumstance of cruelty, so far as Church and State could compass their plans. By this measure at least 160,000 subjects<sup>2</sup> of more than average value were lost to the State. Portugal and other Christian countries took the same cruel step a few years later; but Spain carried the policy much further. From the year of its establishment, the Inquisition was hotly at work destroying heresy of every kind; and the renowned Torquemada, the confessor of Isabella, is credited with having burned over ten thousand persons in his eighteen years of office as Grand Inquisitor, besides torturing many thousands. Close upon a hundred thousand more were terrified into submission; and a further six thousand burned in effigy in their absence or after death.<sup>3</sup> The destruction of books was proportionally thorough;<sup>4</sup> and when Lutheran Protestantism arose it was persistently killed out; thousands leaving the country in view of the hopelessness of the cause.<sup>5</sup> At this rate, every vestige of independent thought must soon have disappeared from any nation in the world. If she is to be judged by the number of her slain and exiled heretics, Spain must once have been nearly as fecund in reformatory and innovating thought as any State in northern Europe; but the fatal conjunction of the royal and the clerical authority sufficed for a whole era to denude her of every variety of the freethinking species.<sup>6</sup>

#### § 10. *Thought in England*

Lying on the outskirts of the world of culture, England in the later Middle Ages and the period of the Italian Renaissance lived

<sup>1</sup> There had previously been sharp social persecution by the Cortès, in 1480, on "anti-Semitic" grounds, the Jews being then debarred from all the professions, and even from commerce. They were thus driven to usury by Christians, who latterly denounce the race for usuriousness. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, ed. 1884, p. 15, note.

<sup>2</sup> The number has been put as high as 800,000. Cp. F. D. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, 1877, p. 54; E. La Rigauière, *Hist. des Perséc. Relig. en Espagne*, 1860, pp. 112-14; Prescott, *Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, Kirk's ed. 1839, p. 323; and refs. in ed. of Buckle cited, p. 541.

<sup>3</sup> Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquis. en Espagne*, ed. 1818, i, 280. As to Llorente's other estimates, which are of doubtful value, cp. Prescott's note, ed. cited, p. 746. But as to Llorente's general credit, see the vindication of U. R. Burke, ii, 85-87.

<sup>4</sup> Llorente, i, 281.

<sup>5</sup> McCrie, *Reformation in Spain*, ch. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. La Rigauière, pp. 309-14; Buckle, as cited, pp. 544, 570; U. R. Burke, i, 59, 85.

intellectually, even where ministered to by the genius of Chaucer, for the most part in dependence on Continental impulses; yet not without notable outcrops of native energy. There is indeed no more remarkable figure in the Middle Ages than ROGER BACON (? 1214-1294), the English Franciscan friar, schooled at Paris. His career remains still in parts obscure. Born at or near Ilchester, in Somersetshire, he studied at Oxford under Edmund Rich, Richard Fitzacre, Robert Grosstête, and Adam de Marisco; and later, for a number of years, at Paris, where he is supposed to have held a chair. On his return he was lionized; but a few years afterwards, in 1257, we find him again in Paris, banished thither by his Order.<sup>1</sup> He was not absolutely imprisoned, but ordered to live under official surveillance in a dwelling where he was forbidden to write, to speak to novices, or observe the stars—rules which, it is pretty clear, he broke, one and all.<sup>2</sup> After some eight years of this durance, Cardinal Guido Falcodi (otherwise Guy Foucaud or De Foulques), who while acting as papal legate in England at the time of the rising of Simon de Montfort may have known or heard of Bacon, became interested in him through his chaplain, Raymond of Laon, who spoke (in error) of the imprisoned friar as having written much on science. The cardinal accordingly wrote asking to see the writings in question. Bacon sent by a friend an explanation to the effect that he had written little, and that he could not devote himself to composition without a written mandate and a papal dispensation. About this time the Cardinal was elevated to the papacy as Clement IV; and in that capacity, a year later (1266), he wrote to Bacon authorizing him to disobey his superior, but exhorting him to do it secretly. Bacon, by his own account, had already spent in forty years of study 2,000 *libri*<sup>3</sup> in addition to purchases of books and instruments and teacher's fees; and it is not known whether the Pope furnished the supplies he declared he needed.<sup>4</sup> To work, however, he went with an astonishing industry, and in the course of less than eighteen months<sup>5</sup> he had produced his chief treatise, the *Opus Majus*; the *Opus Minus*, designed as a summary or sample of the former; and the later *Opus Tertium*, planned to serve as a preamble to the two others.<sup>6</sup>

Through all three documents there runs the same inspiration, the *Opus Tertium* and the *Majus* constituting a complete treatise,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Émile Charles, *Roger Bacon*, Paris, 1861, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie. ii, 1880, vol. ii, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> This sum of *libri* has been taken by English writers to stand for English "pounds." It may however have represented Parisian *livres*.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Brewer, *Introd. to Opera Inedita of Roger Bacon*, 1859, pp. xiv-xxiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. xlv.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. xxx, sq.



which gives at once the most vivid idea of the state of culture at the time, and the most intimate presentment of a student's mind, that survive from the thirteenth century. It was nothing less than a demand, such as was made by Francis Bacon three hundred and fifty years later, and by Auguste Comte in the nineteenth century, for a reconstruction of all studies and all tuition. Neither pope nor emperor could have met it; but Clement gave Roger his freedom, and he returned to Oxford, papally protected, at the end of 1267. Four years later Clement died, and was succeeded by Gregory X, a Franciscan.

At this stage of his life Bacon revealed that, whatever were his wrongs, he was inclined to go halfway to meet them. In a new writing of similar purport with the others, the *Compendium Philosophiæ*, written in 1271,<sup>1</sup> he not only attacked in detail the ecclesiastical system,<sup>2</sup> but argued that the Christians were incomparably inferior to pagans in morals, and therefore in science;<sup>3</sup> that there was more truth in Aristotle's few chapters on laws than in the whole *corpus juris*;<sup>4</sup> that the Christian religion, as commonly taught, was not free of errors; and that philosophy truly taught, and not as in the schools, was perhaps the surer way to attain both truth and salvation.<sup>5</sup>

Again he was prosecuted; and this time, after much delay, it was decided that the entire Order should deal with the case. Not till 1277 did the trial come off, under the presidency of the chief of the Order, Jerome of Ascoli. Bacon was bracketed with another insubordinate brother, Jean d'Olive; and both were condemned. In Bacon's case his doctrine was specified as *continentem aliquas novitates suspectas, propter quas fuit idem Rogerius carceri condemnatus*.<sup>6</sup> This time Bacon seems to have undergone a real imprisonment, which lasted fourteen years. During that time four more popes held office, the last of them being the said Jerome, elevated to the papal chair as Nicholas IV. Not till his death in 1292 was Bacon released—to die two years later.

He was in fact, with all his dogmatic orthodoxy, too essentially in advance of his age to be otherwise than suspect to the typical

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* pp. liv-lv.

<sup>2</sup> *Compendium Philosophiæ*, cap. i, in *Op. Ined.* pp. 398-401.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 401. Cp. p. 412 as to the multitude of theologians at Paris banished for sodomy.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 422. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* cc. ii-v, pp. 404-32.

<sup>6</sup> Brewer, p. xciii, note, cites this in an extract from the Chronicle of Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, a late writer of the fifteenth century, who "gives no authority for his statement." Dr. Bridges, however, was enabled by M. Sabatier to trace the passage back to the MS. *Chronica xxiv Generalium Ordinis Minorum*, which belongs to the first half of the fourteenth century; and the passage, as M. Sabatier remarks, has all the appearance of being an extract from the official journal of this Order. (Bridges, *The "Opus Majus" of Roger Bacon*, Suppl. vol. 1900, p. 158.)

ecclesiastics of any time. The marvel is that with his radical skepticism as to all forms of human knowledge; his intense perception of the fatality of alternate credulity and indifference which kept most men in a state of positive or negative error on every theme; his insatiable thirst for knowledge; his invincible repugnance to all acknowledgment of authority,<sup>1</sup> and his insistence on an ethical end, he should have been able to rest as he did in the assumption of a divine infallibility vested in what he knew to be a corruptible text. It was doubtless defect of strictly philosophic thought, as distinguished from practical critical faculty, that enabled him to remain orthodox in theology while anti-authoritarian in everything else. As it was, his recalcitrance to authority in such an age sufficed to make his life a warfare upon earth. And it is not surprising that, even as his Franciscan predecessor Robert Grosstête, bishop of Lincoln, came to be reputed a sorcerer on the strength of having written many treatises on scientific questions—as well as on witchcraft—Roger Bacon became a wizard in popular legend, and a scandal in the eyes of his immediate superiors, for a zest of secular curiosity no less uncommon and unpriestlike.<sup>2</sup> "It is sometimes impossible to avoid smiling," says one philosophic historian of him, "when one sees how artfully this personified thirst for knowledge seeks to persuade himself, or his readers, that knowledge interests him only for ecclesiastical ends. No one has believed it: neither posterity.....nor his contemporaries, who distrusted him as worldly-minded."<sup>3</sup>

Worldly-minded he was in a noble sense, as seeking to know the world of Nature; and perhaps the most remarkable proof of his originality on this side is his acceptance of the theory of the earth's sphericity. Peter de Alliaco, whose *Imago Mundi* was compiled in 1410, transcribed from Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus* almost literally, but without acknowledgment, a passage containing quotations from Aristotle, Pliny, and Seneca, all arguing for the possibility of reaching India by sailing westward. Columbus, it is known, was familiar with the *Imago Mundi*; and this passage seems greatly to have inspired him in his task.<sup>4</sup> This alone was sufficient practical heresy

<sup>1</sup> "Il était né rebelle." "Le mépris systématique de l'autorité, voilà vraiment ce qu'il professe." (Hauréau, *Pt. II*, ii, 76, 85.)

<sup>2</sup> See the sympathetic accounts of Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, pp. 109-12; White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 379-91.

<sup>3</sup> Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. i, 476.

<sup>4</sup> Humboldt, *Examen Crit. de l'hist. de la Géographie*, 1836-39, i, 64-70, gives the passages in the *Opus Majus* and the *Imago Mundi*, and paraphrase of the latter in Columbus's letter to Ferdinand and Isabella from Jamaica (given also in P. L. Ford's *Writings of Christopher Columbus*, 1892, p. 199 sq.). Cp. Ellis's note to Francis Bacon's *Temporis Partus Masculus*, in Ellis and Spedding's ed. of Bacon's Works, iii, 534. It



to put Bacon in danger; and yet his real orthodoxy can hardly be doubted.<sup>1</sup> He always protested against the scholastic doctrine of a "twofold truth," insisting that revelation and philosophy were at one, but that the latter also was divine.<sup>2</sup> It probably mattered little to his superiors, however, what view he took of the abstract question: it was his zeal for concrete knowledge that they detested. His works remain to show the scientific reach of which his age was capable, when helped by the lore of the Arabs; for he seems to have drawn from Averroës some of his inspiration to research;<sup>3</sup> but in the England of that day his ideals of research were as unattainable as his wrath against clerical obstruction was powerless;<sup>4</sup> and Averroïsism in England made little for innovation.<sup>5</sup> The English Renaissance properly sets-in in the latter half of the sixteenth century, when the glory of that of Italy is passing away.

In the fourteenth century, indeed, a remarkable new life is seen arising in England in the poetry and prose of Chaucer, from contact with the literature of Italy and France; but while Chaucer reflects the spontaneous medieval hostility to the self-seeking and fraudulent clergy, and writes of deity with quite medieval irreverence,<sup>6</sup> he tells little of the Renaissance spirit of critical unbelief, save when he notes the proverbial irreligion of the physicians,<sup>7</sup> or smiles significantly over the problem of the potency of clerical cursing and absolution,<sup>8</sup> or shrugs his shoulders over the question of a future state.<sup>9</sup> In such matters he is noticeably undevout; and though it is impossible to found on such passages a confident assertion that Chaucer had no belief in immortality, it is equally impossible in view of them to claim that he was a warm believer.

Prof. Lounsbury, who has gone closely and critically into the whole question of Chaucer's religious opinions, asks concerning the lines in the *Knight's Tale* on the passing of Arcite: "Can modern agnosticism point to a denial more emphatic than that made in the fourteenth century of the belief that there exists for

should be remembered in this connection that Columbus found believers, in the early stage of his undertaking, only in two friars, one a Franciscan and one a Dominican. See Ford's ed. of the *Writings*, p. 107.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hauréau, *Ptie. II*, ii, 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Majus*, Pars ii, cap. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *Averroës*, p. 263. Bacon mentions Averroës in the *Opus Majus*, P. i, cc. 6, 15; P. ii, c. 13; ed. Bridges, iii (1900), 14, 33, 67. In the passage last cited he calls him "homo solidæ sapientiae, corrigens multa priorum et addens multa, quamvis corrigendus sit in aliquibus, et in multis complendus."

<sup>4</sup> See the careful notice by Prof. Adamson in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 152-60; Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.* ii, 77-87.

<sup>5</sup> Two Englishmen, the Carmelite John of Baconthorpe (d. 1346) and Walter Burleigh, were among the orthodox Averroïsts; the latter figuring as a Realist against William of Occam.

<sup>6</sup> *Legend of Good Women*, ll. 1089-43; *Parliament of Fowls*, ll. 199-200.

<sup>7</sup> *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, 438 (440).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* 653-61 (655-63). Cp. *Tale of the Wife of Bath*; 1-25.

<sup>9</sup> *Legend of Good Women*, prol. ll. 1-9; *Knight's Tale*, ll. 1951-56 (2809-14 of MS. group A).

us any assurance of the life that is lived beyond the grave?" (*Studies in Chaucer*, 1892, ii, 514-15). Prof. Skeat, again, affirms (Notes to the *Tales*, Clar. Press Compl. Chaucer, v, 92) that "the real reason why Chaucer could not here describe the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven is because he had already copied Boccaccio's description, and had used it with respect to the death of Troilus" (see *Troil.* v, 1807-27; stanzas 7, 8, 9 from the end). This evades the question as to the poet's faith. In point of fact, the passage in *Troilus and Criseyde* is purely pagan, and tells of no Christian belief, though that poem, written before the *Tales*, seems to parade a Christian contempt for pagan lore. (Cp. Lounsbury, as cited, p. 512.)

The ascription of unbelief seems a straining of the evidence; but it would be difficult to gainsay the critic's summing-up: "The general view of all his [Chaucer's] production leaves upon the mind the impression that his personal religious history was marked by the dwindling devoutness which makes up the experience of so many lives—the fallings from us, the vanishings, we know not how or when, of beliefs in which we have been bred. One characteristic which not unusually accompanies the decline of faith in the individual is in him very conspicuous. This is the prominence given to the falsity and fraud of those who have professedly devoted themselves to the advancement of the cause of Christianity.....Much of Chaucer's late work, so far as we know it to be late, is distinctly hostile to the Church.....It is, moreover, hostile in a way that implies an utter disbelief in certain of its tenets, and even a disposition to regard them as full of menace to the future of civilization" (Lounsbury, vol. cited, pp. 519-20).

Against this general view is to be set that which proceeds on an unquestioning acceptance of the "Retraction" or confession at the close of the *Canterbury Tales*, as to the vexed question of the genuineness of which see the same critic, work cited, i, 412-15; iii, 40. The fact that the document is appended to the concluding "Parson's Tale" (also challenged as to authenticity), which is not a tale at all, and to which the confession refers as "this little treatise or rede," suggests strongly a clerical influence brought to bear upon the aging poet.

To infer real devotion on his part from his sympathetic account of the good parson, or from the dubious Retraction appended to the *Tales*, is as unwarrantable as is the notion, dating from the Reformation period, that he was a Wicliffite.<sup>1</sup> Even if the Retraction be of his writing, under pressure in old age, it points to a previous indifferentism; and from the great mass of his work

<sup>1</sup> The notion connects with the spurious *Ploughman's Tale* and *Pilgrim's Tale*, as to which see Lounsbury, as cited, i, 460-73; ii, 460-69.



there can be drawn only the inference that he is essentially non-religious in temper and habit of mind. But he is no disputant, no propagandist, whether on ecclesiastical or on intellectual grounds; and after his day there is social retrogression and literary relapse in England for two centuries. That there was some practical rationalism in his day, however, we gather from the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, by the contemporary poet Langland (fl. 1360-90), where there is a vivid account of the habit among anti-clerical laymen of arguing against the doctrine of original sin and the entailment of Adam's offence on the whole human race.<sup>1</sup> To this way of thinking Chaucer probably gave a stimulus by his translation of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius, where is cited the "not unskilful" dilemma: "If God is, whence come wicked things? And if God is not, whence come good things?"<sup>2</sup> The stress of the problem is hard upon theism; and to ponder it was to resent the doctrine of inherited guilt. The Church had, in fact, visibly turned this dogma to its own ends, insisting on the universal need of ghostly help even as it repelled the doctrine of unalterable predestination. In both cases, of course, the matter was settled by Scripture and authority; and Langland's reply to the heretics is mere angry dogmatism.

There flourished, further, a remarkable amount of heresy of the species seen in Provence and Northern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such sectaries being known in England under the generic name of "Lollards," derived from the Flemish, in which it seems to have signified singers of hymns.<sup>3</sup> Lollards or "Beghards," starting from the southern point of propagation, spread all over civilized Northern Europe, meeting everywhere persecution alike from the parish priests and the mendicant monks; and in England as elsewhere their anti-clericalism and their heresy were correlative. In the formal Lollard petition to Parliament in 1395, however, there is evident an amount of innovating opinion which implies more than the mere stimulus of financial pressure. Not only the papal authority, monasteries, clerical celibacy, nuns' vows, transubstantiation, exorcisms, bought blessings, pilgrimages, prayers for the dead, offerings to images, confessions and absolutions, but war and capital punishment and "unnecessary trades," such as those of goldsmiths and armourers, are condemned by those early Utopists.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, ll. 5809 sq. Wright's ed. i, 179-80.

<sup>2</sup> Chaucer's *Boece*, B. I. Prose iv, ll. 223-26, in Skeat's *Student's Chaucer*.

<sup>3</sup> Mosheim, 14 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 36, and note. Cp. Green, *Short History of the English People*, ch. v, § 3, ed. 1881, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Green, *Short Hist.* ch. v, § 5; Massingberd, *The English Reformation*, p. 171.

In what proportion they really thought out the issues they dealt with we can hardly ascertain; but a chronicler of Wiclif's time, living at Leicester, testifies that you could not meet two men in the street but one was a Lollard.<sup>1</sup> The movement substantially came to nothing, suffering murderous persecution in the person of Oldecastle (Lord Cobham) and others, and disappearing in the fifteenth century in the demoralization of conquest and the ruin of the civil wars; but apart from Chaucer's poetry it is more significant of foreign influences in England than almost any other phenomenon down to the reign of Henry VIII.

It is still doubtful, indeed, whence the powerful Wiclif derived his marked Protestantism as to some Catholic dogmas; but it would seem that he too may have been reached by the older Paulician or other southern heresy.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1286 a form of heresy approaching the Albigensian and the Waldensian is found in the province of Canterbury, certain persons there maintaining that Christians were not bound by the authority of the Pope and the Fathers, but solely by that of the Bible and "necessary reason."<sup>3</sup> It is true that Wiclif never refers to the Waldenses or Albigenses, or any of the continental reformers of his day, though he often cites his English predecessor, Bishop Grosstête;<sup>4</sup> but this may have been on grounds of policy. To cite heretics could do no good; to cite a bishop was helpful. The main reason for doubting a foreign influence in his case is that to the last he held by purgatory and absolute predestination.<sup>5</sup> In any case, Wiclif's practical and moral resentment of ecclesiastical abuses was the mainspring of his doctrine; and his heresies as to transubstantiation and other articles of faith can be seen to connect with his anti-priestly attitude. He, however, was morally disinterested as compared with the would-be plunderers who formed the bulk of the anti-Church party of John of Gaunt; and his failure to effect any reformation was due to the fact that on one hand there was not intelligence enough in the nation to respond to his doctrinal common sense, while on the other he could not so separate ecclesiastical from feudal tyranny and extortion as to set up a political movement which should strike at clerical evils without inciting some to impeach the nobility who held the balance of

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Lechler, *Wycliffe and his English Precursors*, Eng. tr. 1-vol. ed. p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Prof. Montagu Burrows, *Wiclif's Place in History*, 1884, p. 49. Maitland (*Eight Essays*, 1852) suggested derivation from the movement of Abbot Joachim and others of that period.

<sup>3</sup> Wilkins' *Concilia*, ii, 124.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Vaughan, as cited by Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Ages*, p. 402.

<sup>5</sup> Hardwick, pp. 417, 418. The doctrine of purgatory was, however, soon renounced by the Lollards (*id.* p. 420).



political power. Charged with setting vassals against tyrant lords, he was forced to plead that he taught the reverse, though he justified the withholding of tithes from bad curates.<sup>1</sup> The revolt led by John Ball in 1381, which was in no way promoted by Wiclif,<sup>2</sup> showed that the country people suffered as much from lay as from clerical oppression.

The time, in short, was one of common ferment, and not only were there other reformers who went much farther than Wiclif in the matter of social reconstruction,<sup>3</sup> but we know from his writings that there were heretics who carried their criticism as far as to challenge the authority and credibility of the Scriptures. Against these *accusatores* and *inimici Scripturae* he repeatedly speaks in his treatise *De veritate Scripturae Sacrae*,<sup>4</sup> which is thus one of the very earliest works in defence of Christianity against modern criticism.<sup>5</sup> His position, however, is almost wholly medieval. One qualification should perhaps be made, in respect of his occasional resort to reason where it was least to be expected, as on the question of restrictions on marriage.<sup>6</sup> But on such points he wavered; and otherwise he is merely scripturalist. The infinite superiority of Christ to all other men, and Christ's virtual authorship of the entire Scriptures, are his premisses—a way of begging the question so simple-minded that it is clear the other side was not heard in reply, though these arguments had formed part of his theological lectures,<sup>7</sup> and so pre-supposed a real opposition. Wiclif was in short a typical Protestant in his unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as a supernatural authority; and when his demand for the publication of the Bible in English was met by "worldly clerks" with the cry that it would "set Christians in debate, and subjects to rebel against their sovereigns," he could only protest that they "openly slander God, the author of peace, and his holy law." Later English history proved that the worldly clerks were perfectly right, and Wiclif the erring optimist of faith. For the rest, his essentially dogmatic view of religion did nothing to counteract the spirit of persecution; and the passing of the Statute for the Burning of Heretics in 1401, with the ready consent of both

<sup>1</sup> See the passages cited in Lewis's *Life of Wiclif*, ed. 1820, pp. 224-25. Cp. Burrows, as cited, p. 19; Le Bas, *Life of Wiclif*, 1832, pp. 357-59.

<sup>2</sup> Lechler, *Wycliffe and his Eng. Precursors*, pp. 371-76; Hardwick, p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Green, *Short History*, ch. v, § 4.

<sup>4</sup> Lechler, p. 236. It forms bk. vi of Wiclif's theological *Summa*.

<sup>5</sup> Baxter, in his address "To the doubting and unbelieving readers" prefixed to his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 1667, names Savonarola, Campanella, Ficinus, Vives, Mornay, Grotius, Cameron, and Micraelius as defenders of the faith, but no writer of the fourteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Le Bas, pp. 342-43; and Hardwick, *Church Hist.: Middle Age*, p. 415.

<sup>7</sup> Lechler, p. 236.

Houses of Parliament, constituted the due dogmatic answer to dogmatic criticism. Yet within a few years the Commons were proposing to confiscate the revenues of the higher clergy:<sup>1</sup> so far was anti-clericalism from implying heterodoxy.

#### § 11. *Thought in France*

As regards France, the record of intellectual history between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries is hardly less scanty than as regards England. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the intellectual life of the French philosophic schools, as we saw, was more vigorous and expansive than that of any other country; so that, looking further to the Provençal literature and to the French beginnings of Gothic architecture, France might even be said to prepare the Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> Outside of the schools, too, there was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a notable dissemination of partially philosophical thought among the middle-class laity. At that period the anti-clerical tendency was strongest in France, where in the thirteenth century lay scholarship stood highest. In the reign of Philippe le Bel (end of thirteenth century) was composed the poem *Fauvel*, by François de Rues, which is a direct attack on pope and clergy;<sup>3</sup> and in the famous *Roman de la Rose*, as developed by Jean le Clopinel (=the Limper) of Meung-sur-Loire, there enters, without any criticism of the Christian creed, an element of all-round Naturalism which indirectly must have made for reason. Begun by Guillaume de Lorris in the time of St. Louis in a key of sentiment and lyricism, the poem is carried on by Jean de Meung under Philippe le Bel in a spirit of criticism, cynicism, science, and satire, which tells of many developments in forty years. The continuation can hardly have been written, as some literary historians assume, about its author's twenty-fifth year; but it may be dated with some certainty between 1270 and 1285. To the work of his predecessor, amounting to less than 5,000 lines, he added 18,000, pouring forth a medley of scholarship, pedantry, philosophic reflection, speculation on the process of nature and the structure and ills of society, on property, morals, marriage, witchcraft, the characters of women, monks, friars, aristocrats—the whole pageant of medieval knowledge and fancy.

<sup>1</sup> Blunt, *Reformation of the Church of England*, 1892, i, 284, and refs.

<sup>2</sup> It is noteworthy that French culture affected the very vocabulary of Dante, as it did that of his teacher, Brunetto Latini. Cp. Littré, *Etudes sur les barbares et le moyen âge*, 3e édit. pp. 399-400. The influence of French literature is further seen in Boccaccio, and in Italian literature in general from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Gebhart, pp. 209-21.

<sup>3</sup> Saintsbury, *Short Hist. of French Lit.* 1882, p. 57.



The literary power of the whole is great, and may be recommended to the general reader as comparing often with that shown in the satirical and social-didactic poems of Burns, though without much of the breath of poetry. Particularly noteworthy, in the historic retrospect, is the assimilation of the ancient Stoic philosophy of "living according to Nature," set forth in the name of a "Reason" who is notably free from theological prepossessions. It is from this standpoint that Jean de Meung assails the mendicant friars and the monks in general: he would have men recognize the natural laws of life; and he carries the principle to the length of insisting on the artificial nature of aristocracy and monarchy, which are justifiable only as far as they subserve the common good. Thus he rises above the medieval literary prejudice against the common people, whose merit he recognizes as Montaigne did later. On the side of science, he expressly denies<sup>1</sup> that comets carry any such message as was commonly ascribed to them alike by popular superstition and by theology—a stretch of freethinking perhaps traceable to Seneca, but nonetheless centuries in advance of the Christendom of the time.<sup>2</sup> On the side of religion, again, he is one of the first to vindicate the lay conception of Christian excellence as against the ecclesiastical. His Naturalism, so far, worked consistently in making him at once anti-ascetic and anti-supernaturalist.

It is not to be inferred, however, that Jean de Meung had learned to doubt the validity of the Christian creed. His long poem, one of the most popular books in Europe for two hundred years, could never have had its vogue if its readers could have suspected it to be even indirectly anti-Christian. He can hardly have held, as some historians believe,<sup>3</sup> the status of a preaching friar; but he claims that he neither blames nor defames religion,<sup>4</sup> respecting it in all forms, provided it be "humble and loyal." He was in fact a man of some wealth, much culture, and orderly in life, thus standing out from the earlier "Goliard" type. When, then, he pronounces Nature "the minister of this earthly state," "vicar and constable of the eternal emperor," he has no thought of dethroning Deity, or even of setting aside the Christian faith. In his rhymed *Testament* he expresses himself quite piously, and lectures monks and women in an edifying fashion.

To say therefore that Jean de Meung's part of the *Roman de la Rose* is a "popular satire on the beliefs of Romanism"

<sup>1</sup> Passage not translated in the old Eng. version.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lenient, pp. 159-60.

<sup>3</sup> Lenient, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> This declaration, as it happens, is put in the mouth of "False-Seeming," but apparently with no ironical intention.

(Owen, *Skeptics of Ital. Renais.* p. 44) is to misstate the case. His doctrine is rather an intellectual expression of the literary reaction against asceticism (cp. Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, i, 319, quoting Lenient) which had been spontaneously begun by the Goliards and Troubadours. At the same time the poem does stand for the new secular spirit alike in "its ingrained religion and its nascent freethought" (Saintsbury, p. 87); and with the *Reynard* epic it may be taken as representing the beginning of "a whole revolution, the resurgence and affirmation of the laity, the new force which is to transform the world, against the Church" (Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 308; cp. Demogeot, *Hist. de la litt. fr.* 5e éd. pp. 130-31, 157; Lanson, pp. 132-36). The frequent flings at the clergy (cp. the partly Chaucerian English version, Skeat's ed. of Chaucer's Works, i, 234; Bell's ed. iv, 230) were sufficient to draw upon this as upon other medieval poems of much secular vogue the anger of "the Church" (Sismondi, *Lit. of South. Europe*, i, 216); but they were none the less relished by believing readers. "The Church" was in fact not an entity of one mind; and some of its sections enjoyed satire directed against the others.

When, then, we speak of the anti-clerical character of much medieval poetry, we must guard against exaggerated implications. It is somewhat of a straining of the facts, for instance, to say of the humorous tale of *Reynard the Fox*, so widely popular in the thirteenth century, that it is essentially anti-clerical to the extent that "Reynard is laic: Isengrim [the wolf] is clerical" (Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, i, 307; cp. Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 44). The *Reynard* epic, in origin a simple humorous animal-story, had various later forms. Some of these, as the Latin poem, and especially the version attributed to Peter of St. Cloud, were markedly anti-clerical, the latter exhibiting a spirit of all-round profanity hardly compatible with belief (cp. Gervinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, 5te Ausg. i, 227-28; Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renais. en Italie*, 1874, p. 39); but the version current in the Netherlands, which was later rendered into English prose by Caxton, is of a very different character (Gervinus, p. 229 sq.). In Caxton's version it is impossible to regard Reynard as laic and Isengrim as clerical; though in the Latin and other versions the wolf figures as monk or abbot. (See also the various shorter satires published by Grimm in his *Reinhart Fuchs*, 1834.) Often the authorship is itself clerical, one party or order satirizing another; sometimes the spirit is religious, sometimes markedly irreverent. (Gervinus, pp. 214-21). "La plupart de ces satires sont l'œuvre des moines et des abbés" (Lenient, *La Satire en France au moyen âge*, 1859, préf. p. 4); and to say that these men were often irreligious is not to say that they were rationalists. It is to be remembered that



nascent Protestantism in England under Henry VIII resorted to the weapons of obscene parody (Blunt, *Ref. of Ch. of England*, ed. 1892, i, 273, note).

"In fine," we may say with a judicious French historian, "one cannot get out of his time, and the time was not come to be non-Christian. Jean de Meung did not perceive that his thought put him outside the Church, and upset her foundations. He is believing and pious, like Rutebeuf.....The Gospel is his rule: he holds it; he defends it; he disputes with those who seem to him to depart from it; he makes himself the champion of the old faith against the novelties of the *Eternal Gospel*.....His situation is that of the first reformers of the sixteenth century, who believed themselves to serve Jesus Christ in using their reason, and who very sincerely, very piously, hoped for the reform of the Church through the progress of philosophy."<sup>1</sup> "Nevertheless," adds the same historian, "one cannot exaggerate the real weight of the work. By his philosophy, which consists essentially in the identity, the sovereignty, of Nature and Reason, he is the first link in the chain which connects Rabelais, Montaigne, Molière; to which Voltaire also links himself, and even in certain regards Boileau."<sup>2</sup>

Men could not then see whither the principle of "Nature" and Reason was to lead, yet even in the age of Jean de Meung the philosophic heads went far, and he can hardly have missed knowing as much, if, as is supposed, he studied at Paris, as he certainly lived and died there. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, as before noted, rationalism at the Paris university was frequently carried in private to a rejection of all the dogmas peculiar to Christianity. At that great school Roger Bacon seems to have acquired his encyclopædic learning and his critical habit; and there it was that in the first half of the fourteenth century William of Occam nourished his remarkable philosophic faculty. From about the middle of the fourteenth century, however, there is a relative arrest of French progress for some two centuries.<sup>3</sup> Three main conditions served to check intellectual advance: the civil wars which involved the loss of the communal liberties which had been established in France between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries;<sup>4</sup> the exhaustion of the nation by the English invasion under Edward III; the repressive power of the Church; and the

<sup>1</sup> Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ed. 1880, i, 440-41; Gebhart, *Orig. de la Renais.* pp. 2, 19, 24-29, 32-35, 41-50; Le Clerc and Renan, *Hist. Litt. de la France au XIVe Siècle*, i, 4; ii, 123; Littré, *Études*, as cited, pp. 424-29.

<sup>3</sup> Duruy, i, 409 sq., 449; Gebhart, pp. 35-41; Morin, *Origines de la Démocratie: La France au moyen âge*, 3e édit. 1865, p. 304 sq.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 135.

general devotion of the national energies to war. After the partial recovery from the ruinous English invasion under Edward III, civil strifes and feudal tyranny wrought new impoverishment, making possible the still more destructive invasion under Henry V; so that in the first half of the fifteenth century France was hardly more civilized than England.<sup>1</sup> It is from the French invasion of Italy under Charles VIII that the enduring renaissance in France broadly dates. Earlier impulses had likewise come from Italy: Lanfranc, Anselm, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and others of lesser note,<sup>2</sup> had gone from Italy to teach in France or England; but it needed the full contact of Italian civilization to raise monarchic France to the stage of general and independent intellectual life.

During the period in question, there had been established the following universities: Paris, 1200; Toulouse, 1220; Montpellier, 1289; Avignon, 1303; Orléans, 1312; Cahors, 1332; Angers, 1337; Orange, 1367; Dôle, 1422; Poitiers, 1431; Caen, 1436; Valence, 1454; Nantes, 1460; Bourges, 1463; Bordeaux, 1472 (Desmazes, *L'Université de Paris*, 1876, p. 2. Other dates for some of these are given on p. 31). But the militarist conditions prevented any sufficient development of such opportunities. In the fourteenth century, says Littré (*Études sur les barbares*, p. 419), "the university of Paris..... was more powerful than at any other epoch.....Never did she exercise such a power over men's minds." But he also decides that in that epoch the first florescence of French literature withered away (p. 387). The long location of the anti-papacy at Avignon (1305-1376) doubtless counted for something in French culture (V. Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. de la France au XIVe siècle*, i, 37; Gebhart, pp. 221-26); but the devastation wrought by the English invasion was sufficient to countervail that and more. See the account of it by Petrarch (letter of the year 1360) cited by Littré, *Études*, pp. 416-17; and by Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i, 59, note. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vi, ch. iii; Dunton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 1888, pp. 79-84. As to the consequences of the English invasion of the fifteenth century see Martin, *Hist. de France*, 4e édit. vi, 132-33; Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, 1831, xii, 582; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i, 83-87.

In northern France of the fourteenth century, as in Provence and Italy and England, there was a manifold stir of innovation and heresy: there as elsewhere the insubordinate Franciscans, with their *Eternal Gospel*, the Paterini, the Beghards, fought their way against

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii, *Renaissance*, Introd. § ii. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, he insists, "le jour baisse horriblement."

<sup>2</sup> Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 47, 78, 108-10.



the Dominican Inquisition. But the Inquisitors burned books as well as men; and much anti-ecclesiastical poetry, some dating even from the Carolingian era, shared the fate of many copies of the Talmud, translations of the Bible, and, à fortiori, every species of heretical writing. In effect, the Inquisition for the time "extinguished freethought"<sup>1</sup> in France. As in England, the ferment of heresy was mixed with one of democracy; and in the French popular poetry of the time there are direct parallels to the contemporary English couplet, "When Adam delved and Eve span, Where was then the gentleman?"<sup>2</sup> Such a spirit could no more prosper in feudal France than in feudal England; and when France emerged from her mortal struggle with the English, to be effectively solidified by Louis XI, there was left in her life little of the spirit of free inquiry. It has been noted that whereas the chronicler Joinville, in the thirteenth century, is full of religious feeling, Froissart, in the fourteenth, priest as he is, exhibits hardly any; and again Comines, in the fifteenth, reverts to the orthodoxy of the twelfth and thirteenth.<sup>3</sup> The middle period was one of indifference, following on the killing out of heresy:<sup>4</sup> the fifteenth century is a resumption of the Middle Ages, and Comines has the medieval cast of mind,<sup>5</sup> although of a superior order. There seems to be no community of thought between him and his younger Italian contemporaries, Machiavelli and Guicciardini; though, "even while Comines was writing, there were unequivocal symptoms of a great and decisive change."<sup>6</sup>

The special development in France of the spirit of "chivalry" had joined the normal uncivilizing influence of militarism with that of clericalism; the various knightly orders, as well as knighthood pure and simple, being all under ecclesiastical sanctions, and more or less strictly vowed to "defend the church,"<sup>7</sup> while supremely incompetent to form an intelligent opinion. It is the more remarkable that in the case of one of the crusading orders heresy of the most blasphemous kind was finally charged against the entire organization, and that it was on that ground annihilated (1311).

<sup>1</sup> Littré, *Études*, as cited, pp. 411-13.

<sup>2</sup> Le Clerc, as cited, p. 259; Gebhart, pp. 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Sir James F. Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, 1892, i. 42.

<sup>4</sup> The Italians said of the French Pope Clement VI (1342-52) that he had small religion. M. Villani, *Cronica*, iii, 43 (ed. 1554).

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Dr. T. Arnold, *Lect. on Mod. Hist.* 4th ed. pp. 111-18; Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 326-27 (1-vol. ed. p. 185); Stephen, as cited, i, 121. "It is hardly too much to say that Comines's whole mind was haunted at all times and at every point by a belief in an invisible and immensely powerful and artful man whom he called God" (last cited).

<sup>6</sup> Buckle, i, 329 (1-vol. ed. p. 186).

<sup>7</sup> Buckle, ii, 133 (1-vol. ed. p. 361); Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 395-96. Religious ceremonies were attached to the initiation of knights in the 13th century. Seignobos, *Hist. de la Civilisation*, ii, 15.

It remains incredible, however, that the order of the Templars can have systematically practised the extravagances or held the tenets laid to their charge. They had of course abused their power and departed from their principles like every other religious order enabled to amass wealth; and the hostility theirs aroused is perfectly intelligible from what is known of the arrogance of its members and the general ruffianism of the Crusaders. Their wealth alone goes far to explain the success of their enemies against them; for, though the numbers of the order were much smaller than tradition gives out, its possessions were considerable. These were the true ground of the French king's attack.<sup>1</sup> But that its members were as a rule either Cathari or anti-Christians, either disguised Moslems or deists, or that they practised obscenity by rule, there is no reason to believe. What seems to have happened was a resort by some unbelieving members to more or less gross burlesque of the mysteries of initiation—a phenomenon paralleled in ancient Greece and in the modern Catholic world, and implying rather hardy irreligion than any reasoned heresy whatever.

The long-continued dispute as to the guilt of the Knights Templars is still chronically re-opened. Hallam, after long hesitation, came finally to believe them guilty, partly on the strength of the admissions made by Michelet in defending them (*Europe in the Middle Ages*, 11th ed. i. 138-42—note of 1848). He attaches, however, a surprising weight to the obviously weak "architectural evidence" cited by Hammer-Purgstall. Heeren (*Essai sur l'influence des croisades*, 1808, pp. 221-22) takes a more judicial view. The excellent summing-up of Lea (*Hist. of the Inquis.* bk. iii, ch. v, pp. 263-76) perhaps gives too little weight to the mass of curious confirmatory evidence cited by writers on the other side (e.g., F. Nicolai, *Versuch über die Beschuldigungen welche dem Tempelherrenorden gemacht worden*, 1782); but his conclusion as to the falsity of the charges against the order as a whole seems irresistible.

The solution that offensive practices occurred irregularly (Lea, pp. 276-77) is pointed to even by the earlier hostile writers (Nicolai, p. 17). It seems to be certain that the initiatory rites included the act of spitting on the crucifix—presumptively a symbolic display of absolute obedience to the orders of those in command (Jolly, *Philippe le Bel*, pp. 264-68). That there was no Catharism in the order seems certain (Lea, p. 249). The

<sup>1</sup> Duruy, i, 368, 373-74. Cp. J. Jolly, *Philippe le Bel*, 1869, i. iii, ch. iv, p. 249. It is to be remembered that Philippe had for years been sorely pressed for money to retrieve his military disasters. See H. Hervieu, *Recherches sur les premiers états généraux*, 1879, pp. 89 sq., 99 sq. He used his ill-gotten gains to restore the currency, which he had debased. *Id.* pp. 101-102.



suggestion that the offensive and burlesque practices were due to the lower grade of "serving brethren," who were condemned by the higher, seems, however, without firm foundation. The courage for such freaks, and the disposition to commit them, were rather more likely to arise among the crusaders of the upper class, who could come in contact with Moslem-Christian unbelief through those of Sicily.

For the further theory that the "Freemasons" (at that period really cosmopolitan guilds of masons) were already given to freethinking, there is again no evidence. That they at times deliberately introduced obscene symbols into church architecture is no proof that they were collectively unbelievers in the Church's doctrines; though it is likely enough that some of them were. Obscenity is the expression not of an intellectual but of a physical and unreasoning bias, and can perfectly well concur with religious feeling. The fact that the medieval masons did not confine obscene symbols to the churches they built for the Templars (Hallam, as cited, pp. 140-41) should serve to discredit alike the theory that the Templars were systematically anti-Christian, and the theory that the Freemasons were so. That for centuries the builders of the Christian churches throughout Europe formed an anti-Christian organization is a grotesque hypothesis. At most they indulged in freaks of artistic satire on the lines of contemporary satirical literature, expressing an anti-clerical bias, with perhaps occasional elements of blasphemy. (See Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Cap. 252, note.) It could well be that there survived among the Freemasons various Gnostic ideas; since the architectural art itself came in a direct line from antiquity. Such heresy, too, might conceivably be winked at by the Church, which depended so much on the heretics' services. But their obscenities were the mere expression of the animal imagination and normal salacity of all ages. Only in modern times, and that only in Catholic countries, has the derivative organization of Freemasonry been identified with freethought propaganda. In England in the seventeenth century the Freemasonic clubs—no longer connected with any trade—were thoroughly royalist and orthodox (Nicolai, pp. 196-98), as they have always remained.

Some remarkable intellectual phenomena, however, do connect with the French university life of the first half of the fourteenth century. WILLIAM OF OCCAM (d. 1347), the English Franciscan, who taught at Paris, is on the whole the most rationalistic of medieval philosophers. Though a pupil of the Realist Duns Scotus, he became the renewer of Nominalism, which is the specifically rationalistic as opposed to the religious mode of metaphysic; and his anti-clerical bias was such that he had to fly from France to

Bavaria for protection from the priesthood. His *Disputatio super potestate ecclesiastica*, and his *Defensorium* directed against Pope John XXII (or XXI), were so uncompromising that in 1323 the Pope gave directions for his prosecution. What came of the step is not known; but in 1328 we find him actually imprisoned with two Italian comrades in the papal palace at Avignon. Thence they made their escape to Bavaria.<sup>1</sup> To the same refuge fled Marsiglio of Padua, author (with John of Jandun) of the *Defensor Pacis* (1324), "the greatest and most original political treatise of the Middle Ages,"<sup>2</sup> in which it is taught that, though monarchy may be expedient, the sovereignty of the State rests with the people, and the hereditary principle is flatly rejected; while it is insisted that the Church properly consists of all Christians, and that the clergy's authority is restricted to spiritual affairs and moral suasion.<sup>3</sup> Of all medieval writers on politics before Machiavelli he is the most modern.

Only less original is Occam, who at Paris came much under Marsiglio's influence. His philosophic doctrines apparently derive from PIERRE AUREOL (Petrus Aureolus, d. 1321), who with remarkable clearness and emphasis rejected both Realism and the doctrine that what the mind perceives are not realities, but *formæ speculares*. Pierre it was who first enounced the Law of Parsimony in philosophy and science—that causes are not to be multiplied beyond mental necessity—which is specially associated with the name of Occam.<sup>4</sup> Both anticipated modern criticism<sup>5</sup> alike of the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophy; and Occam in particular drew so decided a line between the province of reason and that of faith that there can be little doubt on which side his allegiance lay.<sup>6</sup> His dialectic is for its time as remarkable as is that of Hume, four centuries later. The most eminent orthodox thinker of the preceding century had been the Franciscan John Duns Scotus (1265 or 1274-1308), who, after teaching great crowds of students at Oxford, was transferred in 1304 to Paris, and in 1308 to Cologne, where he died. A Realist in his philosophy, Duns Scotus opposed the Aristotelian scholasticism, and in particular criticized Thomas Aquinas as having unduly subordinated faith and practice to speculation and theory. The number of matters of faith which Thomas had held to be

<sup>1</sup> Hauréan, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, Ptie II, vol. ii, 359-60.

<sup>2</sup> Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 265. Cp. Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, ii, 64-67; Tullo Massarani, *Studi di politica e di storia*, 2a ed. 1899, pp. 112-13; Neander, *Ch. Hist.* Eng. tr. 1855, ix, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Poole, pp. 266-76. Cp. Hardwick, *Church History, Middle Age*, 1853, pp. 346-47.

<sup>4</sup> Ueberweg, i, 461-62.

<sup>5</sup> "His (Occam's) philosophy is that of centuries later." (Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 148. Cp. pp. 150-51.)

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Hardwick, p. 377, and Rettberg, as there cited.



demonstrable by reason, accordingly, was by Duns Scotus much reduced; and, applying his anti-rationalism to current belief, he fought zealously for the dogma that Mary, like Jesus, was immaculately conceived.<sup>1</sup> But Occam, turning his predecessor's tactic to a contrary purpose, denied that any matter of faith was demonstrable by reason at all. He granted that on rational grounds the existence of a God was probable, but denied that it was strictly demonstrable, and rejected the ontological argument of Anselm. As to matters of faith, he significantly observed that the will to believe the indemonstrable is meritorious.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult now to recover a living sense of the issues at stake in the battle between Nominalism and Realism, and of the social atmosphere in which the battle was carried on. Broadly speaking, the Nominalists were the more enlightened school, the Realists standing for tradition and authority; and it has been alleged that "the books of the Nominalists, though the art of printing tended strongly to preserve them, were suppressed and destroyed to such a degree that it is now exceedingly difficult to collect them, and not easy to obtain copies even of the most remarkable."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, while we have seen Occam a fugitive before clerical enmity, we shall see Nominalists agreeing to persecute a Realist to the death in the person of Huss in the following century. So little was there to choose between the camps in the matter of sound civics; and so easily could the hierarchy wear the colours of any philosophical system.

Contemporary with Occam was Durand de St. Pourçain, who became a bishop (d. 1332), and, after ranking as of the school of Thomas Aquinas, rejected and opposed its doctrine. With all this heresy in the air, the principle of "double truth," originally put in currency by Averroism, came to be held in France as in Italy, in a sense which implied the consciousness that theological truth is not truth at all.<sup>4</sup> Occam's pupil, Buridan, rector of the University of Paris (fl. 1340), substantially avoided theology, and dealt with moral and intellectual problems on their own merits.<sup>5</sup> It is recorded by Albert of Saxony, who studied at Paris in the first half of the century, that one of his teachers held by the theory of the motion of the earth.<sup>6</sup> Even a defender of Church doctrines, Pierre d'Ailly,

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 75-76; Mosheim, 14 C. pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5. As to his religious bigotry, see Milman, p. 142, notes.

<sup>2</sup> Ueberweg, i, 460-61; cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, pp. 275-81.

<sup>3</sup> James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, ed. 1869, i, 250-51.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Ueberweg, p. 464. Mr. Poole's judgment (p. 280) that Occam "starts from the point of view of a theologian" hardly does justice to his attitude towards theology. Occam had indeed to profess acceptance of theology; but he could not well have made less account of its claims.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, pp. 465-66.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 466.

accepted Occam's view of theism,<sup>1</sup> and it appears to be broadly true that Occam had at Paris an unbroken line of successors down to the Reformation.<sup>2</sup> In a world in which the doctrine of a two-fold truth provided a safety-valve for heresy, such a philosophical doctrine as his could not greatly affect lay thought; but at Paris University in the year 1376 there was a startling display of freethinking by the philosophical students, not a little suggestive of a parody of the Averroist propositions denounced by the Bishop of Paris exactly a century before. Under cover of the doctrine of two-fold truth they propounded a list of 219 theses, in which they (1) denied the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection, and the immortality of the soul; (2) affirmed the eternity of matter and the uselessness of prayer, but also posited the principles of astrology; (3) argued that the higher powers of the soul are incapable of sin, and that voluntary sexual intercourse between the unmarried is not sinful; and (4) suggested that there are fables and falsehoods in the gospels as in other books.<sup>3</sup> The element of youthful gasconade in the performance is obvious, and the Archbishop sharply scolded the students; but there must have been much free discussion before such a manifesto could have been produced. Nevertheless, untoward political conditions prevented any dissemination of the freethinking spirit in France; and not for some two centuries was there such another growth of it. The remarkable case of Nicolaus of Autricuria, who in 1348 was forced to recant his teaching of the atomistic doctrine,<sup>4</sup> illustrates at once the persistence of the spirit of reason in times of darkness, and the impossibility of its triumphing in the wrong conditions.

## § 12. Thought in the Teutonic Countries

The life of the rest of Europe in the later medieval period has little special significance in the history of freethought. France and Italy, by German admission, were the lands of the medieval *Aufklärung*.<sup>5</sup> The poetry of the German Minnesingers, a growth from that of the Troubadours, presented the same anti-clerical features;<sup>6</sup> and the story of *Reynard the Fox* was turned to anti-

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* *ib.*

<sup>2</sup> Poole, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, i, 37, citing John of Goch, *De libertate Christiana*, lib. i. cc. 17, 18. Compare the Averroist propositions of 1269-1277, given above, pp. 319-20.

<sup>4</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 187-88 (Eng. tr. i, 225-26).

<sup>5</sup> Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 164.

<sup>6</sup> Gervinus, *Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, 5te Ausg. i, 489-99. Even in the period before the Minnesingers the clerical poetry had its anti-clerical side. *Id.* p. 194. Towards the end of the 12th century Nigellus Wireker satirized the monks in his *Brunellus, seu speculum stultorum*. Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Cap. 252. See Menzel's note, before cited, for a remarkable outbreak of anti-clerical if not anti-Christian satire, in the form of sculpture in an ancient carving in the Strasburg Cathedral.



ecclesiastical purpose in Germany as in France. The relative freethinking set up by the crusaders' contact with the Saracens seems to be the source of doubt of the Minnesinger Freidank concerning the doom of hell-fire on heretics and heathens, the opinion of WALTER DER VOGELWEIDE that Christians, Jews, and Moslems all serve the same God,<sup>1</sup> and still more mordant heresy. But such bold freethinking did not spread. Material prosperity rather than culture was the main feature of German progress in the Middle Ages; architecture being the only art greatly developed. Heresy of the anti-ecclesiastical order indeed abounded, and was duly persecuted; but the higher freethinking developments were in the theosophic rather than the rationalistic direction. Albert the Great (fl. 1260), "the universal Doctor," the chief German teacher of the Middle Ages, was of unimpeached orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

The principal German figure of the period is Master Eckhart (d. 1329), who, finding religious beliefs excluded from the sphere of reason by the freer philosophy of his day, undertook to show that they were all matters of reason. He was, in fact, a mystically reasoning preacher, and he taught in the interests of popular religion. Naturally, as he philosophized on old bases, he did not really subject his beliefs to any skeptical scrutiny, but took them for granted and proceeded speculatively upon them. This sufficed to bring him before the Inquisition at Cologne, where he recanted conditionally on an appeal to the Pope. Dying soon after, he escaped the papal bull condemning twenty-eight of his doctrines. His school later divided into a heretical and a Church party, of which the former, called the "false free spirits," seems to have either joined or resembled the antinomian Brethren of the Free Spirit, then numerous in Germany. The other section became known as the "Friends of God," a species of mystics who were "faithful to the whole medieval imaginative creed, Transubstantiation, worship of the Virgin and Saints, Purgatory."<sup>3</sup> Through Tauler and others, Eckhart's pietistic doctrine gave a lead to later Protestant evangelicalism; but the system as a whole can never have been held by any popular body.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reuter, *Gesch. der relig. Aufklärung*, ii, 62-63; Gervinus, i, 523; ii, 69; Kurtz, *Gesch. der deutschen Litteratur*, 1853, i, 428, col. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Milman, *Latin Chr.* ix, 125. Albert was an Aristotelian—a circumstance which makes sad havoc of Menzel's proposition (*Geschichte*, Cap. 251) that the "German spirit" did not take naturally to Aristotle. Menzel puts the fact and the theory on opposite pages.

<sup>3</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 258. Cp. p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> For a full account of Eckhart's teaching see Dr. A. Lasson's monograph (§ 106) in Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philos.* i, 467-84; also Ullmann, *Reformers before the Ref.* ii, 23-31. Cp. Lea, *Hist. of Inquis.* ii, 354-59, 362-69, as to the sects. As to Tauler, see Milman, ix, 255-56. He opposed the more advanced pantheism of the Beghards. *Id.* p. 262.

Dr. Lasson pronounces (Ueberweg, i, 483) that the type of Eckhart's character and teaching "was derived from the innermost essence of the German national character." At the same time he admits that all the offshoots of the school departed more or less widely from Eckhart's type—that is, from the innermost essence of their own national character. It would be as plausible to say that the later mysticism of Fénelon derived from the innermost essence of the French character. The *Imitatio Christi* has been similarly described as expressing the German character, on the assumption that it was written by Thomas à Kempis. Many have held that the author was the Frenchman Gerson (Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, i, 139-40). It was in all probability, as was held by Suarez, the work of several hands, one a monk of the twelfth century, another a monk of the thirteenth, and the third a theologian of the fifteenth; neither Gerson nor Thomas à Kempis being concerned (Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. du XIVe Siècle*, 2e édit. pp. 384-85; cp. Neale's *Hist. of the so-called Jansenist Church of Holland*, 1858, pp. 97-98).

The *Imitatio Christi* (1471), the most popular Christian work of devotion ever published,<sup>1</sup> tells all the while of the obscure persistence of the search for knowledge and for rational satisfactions. Whatever be the truth as to its authorship, it belongs to all Christendom in respect of its querulous strain of protest against all manner of intellectual curiosity. After the first note of world-renunciation, the call to absorption in the inner religious life, there comes the sharp protest against the "desire to know." "Surely an humble husbandman that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, laboureth to understand the course of the heavens.....Cease from an inordinate desire of knowing."<sup>2</sup> No sooner is the reader warned to consider himself the frailest of all men than he is encouraged to look down on all reasoners. "What availeth it to cavil and dispute much about dark and hidden things, when for being ignorant of them we shall not be so much as reprov'd at the day of judgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and give our minds to that which is curious and hurtful.....And what have we to do with *genus* and *species*, the dry notions of logicians?"<sup>3</sup> The homily swings to and fro between occasional admissions that "learning is not to be blamed," perhaps interpolated by one who feared to have religion figure as opposed to knowledge, and recurrent flings—perhaps also

<sup>1</sup> In the 400 years following its publication there were published over 6,000 separate editions.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. i, ch. ii, 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. i, ch. iii, 1, 2.



interpolated—at all who seek book-lore or physical science; but the note of distrust of reason prevails. “Where are all those Doctors and Masters whom thou didst well know whilst they lived and flourished in learning? Now others have their livings, and perchance scarce ever think of them. While they lived they seemed something, but now they are not spoken of.”<sup>1</sup> It belongs to the whole conception of retreat and aloofness that the devout man should “meddle not with curiosities, but read such things as may rather yield compunction to his heart than occupation to his head”; and the last chapter of the last book closes on the note of the abnegation of reason. “Human reason is feeble and may be deceived, but true faith cannot be deceived. All reason and natural search ought to follow faith, not to go before it, nor to break in upon it.....If the works of God were such that they might be easily comprehended by human reason, they could not be justly called marvellous or unspeakable.” Thus the very inculcation of humility, by its constant direction against all intellectual exercise, becomes an incitement to a spiritual arrogance; and all manner of science finds in the current ideal of piety its pre-ordained antagonist.

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* § 5.

## CHAPTER X

### FREETHOUGHT IN THE RENAISSANCE

#### § 1. *The Italian Evolution*

WHAT is called the Renaissance was, broadly speaking, an evolution of the culture forces seen at work in the later “Middle Ages,” newly fertilized by the recovery of classic literature; and we shall have to revert at several points of our survey to what we have been considering as “medieval” in order to perceive the “new birth.” The term is inconveniently vague, and is made to cover different periods, sometimes extending from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, sometimes signifying only the fifteenth. It seems reasonable to apply it, as regards Italy, to the period in which southern culture began to outgo that of France, and kept its lead—that is, from the end of the fourteenth century<sup>1</sup> to the time of the Counter-Reformation. That is a comparatively distinct sociological era.

Renascent Italy is, after ancient Greece, the great historical illustration of the sociological law that the higher civilizations arise through the passing-on of seeds of culture from older to newer societies, under conditions that specially foster them and give them freer growth. The straitened and archaic pictorial art of Byzantium, unprogressive in the hidebound life of the Eastern Empire, developed in the free and striving Italian communities till it paralleled the sculpture of ancient Greece; and it is to be said for the Church that, however she might stifle rational thought, she economically elicited the arts of painting and architecture (statuary being tabooed as too much associated with pagan worships), even as Greek religion had promoted architecture and sculpture. By force, however, of the tendency of the arts to keep religion anthropomorphic where deeper culture is lacking, popular belief in Renaissance Italy was substantially on a par with that of polytheistic Greece.

Before the general recovery of ancient literature, the main motives to rationalism, apart from the tendency of the Aristotelian

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Symonds writes that in the age of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio “what we call the Renaissance had not yet arrived” (*Renaissance in Italy: Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, p. 9).



philosophy to set up doubts about creation and Providence and a future state, were (1) the spectacle of the competing creed of Islam,<sup>1</sup> made known to the Italians first by intercourse with the Moors, later by the Crusades; and further and more fully by the Saracenized culture of Sicily and commercial intercourse with the east; (2) the spectacle of the strife of creeds within Christendom;<sup>2</sup> and (3) the spectacle of the worldliness and moral insincerity of the bulk of the clergy. It is in that atmosphere that the Renaissance begins; and it may be said that freethought stood veiled beside its cradle.

In such an atmosphere, even on the ecclesiastical side, demand for "reforms" naturally made headway; and the Council of Constance (1414-1418) was convened to enact many besides the ending of the schism.<sup>3</sup> But the Council itself was followed by seven hundred prostitutes;<sup>4</sup> and its relation to the intellectual life was defined by its bringing about, on a charge of heresy, the burning of John Huss, who had come under a letter of safe-conduct from the emperor. The baseness of the act was an enduring blot on the Church; and a hundred years later, in a Germany with small goodwill to Bohemia, Luther made it one of his foremost indictments of the hierarchy. But in the interim the spirit of reform had come to nothing. Cut off from much of the force that was needed to effect any great moral revolution in the Church, the reforming movement soon fell away,<sup>5</sup> and the Church was left to ripen for later and more drastic treatment.

How far, nevertheless, anti-clericalism could go among the scholarly class even in Italy is seen in the career of one of the leading humanists of the Renaissance, LORENZO VALLA (1406-1457). In the work of his youth, *De Voluptate et Vero Bono*, a hardy vindication of aggressive Epicureanism—at a time when the title of Epicurean stood for freethinker<sup>6</sup>—he plainly sets up a rationalist standard, affirming that science is founded on reason and Nature, and that Nature is God. Not content with a theoretic defiance of the faith, he violently attacked the Church. It was probably to the protection of Alfonso of Aragon, king of Naples, who though pious was not pro-clerical,<sup>7</sup> that Valla was able to do what he did, above

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 280-82, 295; Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.* 4th ed. ii, 67; Reuter, *Gesch. der relig. Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 139-41. It is noteworthy that the troubadour, Austore d'Orlac, in cursing the crusades and the clergy who promoted them, suggests that the Christians should turn Moslems, seeing that God is on the side of the unbelievers (Gieseler, *Per. III. Div. III.*, § 58, note 1).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Burckhardt, *Civ. of the Renais. in Italy*, Eng. tr. ed. 1892, pp. 490, 492.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hardwick, p. 361; "Janus," *The Pope and the Council*, p. 308.

<sup>5</sup> Burckhardt, p. 497, note.

<sup>6</sup> Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. vol. i, introd. p. 115. Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 35, 226.

all to write his famous treatise, *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione*, wherein he definitely proved once for all that the "donation" in question was a fiction.<sup>1</sup> Such an opinion had been earlier maintained at the Council of Basle by Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, and before him by the remarkable Nicolaus of Cusa;<sup>2</sup> but when the existence of Valla's work was known he had to fly from Rome afresh (1443) to Naples, where he had previously been protected for seven years. Applying the same critical spirit to more sacrosanct literature, he impugned the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed, and of the letter of Abgarus to Jesus Christ, given by Eusebius; proceeding further to challenge many of the mistranslations in the Vulgate.<sup>3</sup> For his untiring propaganda he was summoned before the Inquisition at Naples, but as usual was protected by the king, whom he satisfied by professing faith in the dogmas of the Church, as distinguished from ecclesiastical history and philology.

It was characteristic of the life of Italy, hopelessly committed on economic grounds to the Church, that Valla finally sought and found reconciliation with the papacy. He knew that his safety at Naples depended on the continued anti-papalism of the throne; he yearned for the society of Rome; and his heart was all the while with the cause of Latin scholarship rather than with that of a visionary reformation. In his as in so many cases, accordingly, intellectual rectitude gave way to lower interests; and he made unblushing offers of retractation to cardinals and pope. In view of the extreme violence of his former attacks,<sup>4</sup> it is not surprising that the reigning Pope, Eugenius IV, refused to be appeased; but on the election of Nicholas V (1447) he was sent for; and he died secretary to the Curia and Canon of St. John Lateran.<sup>5</sup>

Where so much of anti-clericalism could find harbourage within the Church, there was naturally no lack of it without; and from the period of Boccaccio till the Catholic reaction after the Reformation a large measure of anti-clerical feeling is a constant feature in Italian life. It was so ingrained that the Church had on the whole to leave it alone. From pope to monk the mass of the clergy had forfeited respect; and gibes at their expense were household words,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As to its history see "Janus," *The Pope and the Council*, p. 131 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Villari, as last cited, pp. 98, 108.

<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that he did not detect, or at least did not declare, the spuriousness of the text of the three witnesses (Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii, 58, note). Here the piety of Alfonso, who knew his Bible by heart, may have restrained him.

<sup>4</sup> See the passages transcribed by Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 148.

<sup>5</sup> Villari, as last cited, pp. 98-101.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Gebhart, *Renaissance en Italie*, pp. 72-73; Burckhardt, pp. 459-65; Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 5-4. "The authors of the most scandalous satires were themselves mostly monks or benficed priests." (Burckhardt, p. 465.)



and the basis of popular songs. Tommaso Guardati of Salerno, better known as Masuccio, attacks all orders of clergy in his collection of tales with such fury that only the protection of the court of Naples could well have saved him; and yet he was a good Catholic.<sup>1</sup> The popular poetic literature, with certain precautions, carried the anti-clerical spirit as far as to parade a humorous non-literary skepticism, putting in the mouths of the questionable characters in its romances all manner of anti-religious opinions which it would be unsafe to print as one's own, but which in this way reached appreciative readers who were more or less in sympathy with the author's sentiments and stratagems. The *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci (1488) is the great type of such early Voltairean humour:<sup>2</sup> it revives the spirit of the Goliards, and passes unscathed in the new Renaissance world, where the earlier Provençal impiety had gone the way of the Inquisition bonfire, books and men alike. Beneath its mockery there is a constant play of rational thought, and every phase of contemporary culture is glanced at in the spirit of always unembittered humour which makes Pulci "the most lovable among the great poets of the Renaissance."<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that Pulci is found affirming the doctrine of an Antipodes with absolute openness, and with impunity, over a hundred years before Galileo. This survival of ancient pagan science seems to have been obscurely preserved all through the Middle Ages. In the eighth century, as we have seen, the priest Feargal or Vergilius, of Bavaria, was deposed from his office by the Pope, on the urging of St. Boniface, for maintaining it; but he was reinstated, died a bishop, and became a saint; and not only that doctrine, but that of the two-fold motion of the earth, was affirmed with impunity before Pulci by Nicolaus of Cusa<sup>4</sup> (d. 1464); though in the fourteenth century Nicolaus of Autricuria had to recant his teaching of the atomistic theory.<sup>5</sup> As Pulci had specially satirized the clergy and ecclesiastical miracles, his body was refused burial in consecrated ground; but the general temper was such as to save him from clerical enmity up to that point.

The Inquisition too was now greatly enfeebled throughout central and northern as well as southern Italy. In 1440 the materialist, mathematician, and astrologer Amadeo de' Landi, of

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt, pp. 451-61; J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, p. 359; Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, i, 153.

<sup>2</sup> See it well analysed by Owen, pp. 147-60. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 199. M. Perrens describes Pulci as "emancipated from all belief"; but holds that he "bantered the faith without the least design of attacking religion" (*La Civilisation florentine*, p. 151). But cp. Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, i, 159-60.

<sup>3</sup> Owen, p. 160. So also Hunt, and the editor of the *Parnaso Italiano*, there cited.

<sup>4</sup> Below, § 4.

<sup>5</sup> Above, p. 361.

Milan, was accused of heresy by the orthodox Franciscans. Not only was he acquitted, but his chief accuser was condemned in turn to make public retractation, which he however declined to do.<sup>1</sup> Fifty years later the Inquisition was still nearly powerless. In 1497 we find a freethinking physician at Bologna, Gabriele de Salò, protected by his patrons against its wrath, although he "was in the habit of maintaining that Christ was not God, but the son of Joseph and Mary.....; that by his cunning he had deceived the world; that he may have died on the cross on account of crimes which he had committed,"<sup>2</sup> and so forth. Nineteen years before, Galeotto Marcio had come near being burned for writing that any man who lived uprightly according to his own conscience would go to heaven, whatever his faith; and it needed the Pope, Sixtus IV, his former pupil, to save him from the Inquisition.<sup>3</sup> Others, who went further, ran similar risks; and in 1500 Giorgio da Novara was burned at Bologna, presumptively for denying the divinity of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> A bishop of Aranda, however, is said to have done the same with impunity, in the same year,<sup>5</sup> besides rejecting hell and purgatory, and denouncing indulgences as a device of the popes to fill their pockets.

During this period too the philosophy of Averroës, as set forth in his "Great Commentary" on Aristotle, was taught in North Italy with an outspokenness not before known. Gaetano of Siena began to lecture on the Commentary at Padua in 1436; it was in part printed there in 1472; and from 1471 to 1499 Nicoletto Vernias seems to have taught, in the Paduan chair of philosophy, the Averroïst doctrine of the world-soul, thus virtually denying the Christian doctrine of immortality. Violent opposition was raised when his pupil Niphus (Nifo) printed similar doctrine in a treatise *De Intellectu et Dæmonibus* (1492); but the professors when necessary disclaimed the more dangerous tenets of Averroïsm.<sup>6</sup> Nifo it was who put into print the maxim of his tribe: *Loquendum est ut plures, sententiendum ut pauci*—"think with the few; speak with the majority."<sup>7</sup>

As in ancient Greece, humorous blasphemy seems to have fared better than serious unbelief.<sup>8</sup> As is remarked by Hallam, the

<sup>1</sup> Lea, ii, 271-72. Cp. pp. 282-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt, p. 502.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 502.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 503, note.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. R. C. Christie's essay, "Pomponatius—a Skeptic," in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902, pp. 131-32; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 345-352.

<sup>7</sup> *Comm. in Aristot. de Gen. et Corr.* lib. i, fol. 29 G. cited by Ellis in note on Bacon, who quotes a version of the phrase in the *De Augmentis*, B. v, end. As to Nifo see Nourrisson, *Machiavelli*, 1875, ch. xii.

<sup>8</sup> As to ribald blasphemies by the Roman clergy see Erasmus, *Epist.* xxvi, 34 (ed. le Clerc), cited by Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 378, note.



number of vindications of Christianity produced in Italy in the fifteenth century proves the existence of much unbelief;<sup>1</sup> and it is clear that, apart from academic doubt, there was abundant free-thinking among men of the world.<sup>2</sup> Erasmus was astonished at the unbelief he found in high quarters in Rome. One ecclesiastic undertook to prove to him from Pliny that there is no future state; others openly derided Christ and the apostles; and many avowed to him that they had heard eminent papal functionaries blaspheming the Mass.<sup>3</sup> The biographer of Pope Paul II has recorded how that pontiff found in his own court, among certain young men, the opinion that faith rested rather on trickeries of the saints (*sanctorum astutiis*) than on evidence; which opinion the Pope eradicated.<sup>4</sup> But in the career of Perugino (1446-1524), who from being a sincerely religious painter became a skeptic in his wrath against the Church which slew Savonarola,<sup>5</sup> we have evidence of a movement of things which no papal fiat could arrest.

As to the beliefs of the great artists in general we have little information. Employed as they so often were in painting religious subjects for the churches, they must as a rule have conformed outwardly; and the artistic temper is more commonly credent than skeptical. But in the case of one of the greatest, LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519), we have evidence of a continual play of critical scrutiny on the world, and a continual revolt against mere authority, which seem incompatible with any acceptance of Christian dogma. In his many notes, unpublished till modern times, his universal genius plays so freely upon so many problems that he cannot be supposed to have ignored those of religion. His stern appraisal of the mass of men<sup>6</sup> carries with it no evangelical qualifications; his passion for knowledge is not Christian;<sup>7</sup> and his reiterated rejection of the principle of authority in science<sup>8</sup> and in literature<sup>9</sup> tells of a spirit which, howsoever it might practise reticence, cannot have

<sup>1</sup> *Lit. Hist. of Europe*, i, 142. Following Eichhorn, Hallam notes vindications by Marsilio Ficino, Alfonso de Spina (a converted Jew), Aeneas Sylvius, and Pico di Mirandola; observing that the work of the first-named "differs little from modern apologies of the same class."

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Ranke, *History of the Popes*, Bohn tr. ed. 1908, i, 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist.* above cited; Burigni, *Vie d'Erasmus*, 1757, i, 148-49.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Canensius, cited by Ranke.

<sup>5</sup> This view seems to solve the mystery as to Perugino's creed. Vasari (ed. Milanesi, iii, 589) calls him "persona di assai poca religione." Mezzanotte (*Della vita di P. Vanucci*, etc. 1836, p. 172 sq.) indignantly rejects the statement, but notes that in Ciatti's MS. annals of Perugia, ad ann. 1524, the mind of the painter is said to have been *come una tavola rasa* in religious matters. Mezzanotte holds that Pietro has been there confounded with a later Perugian painter.

<sup>6</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *Frammenti letterari e filosofici*, trascelti par Dr. Edmondo Solmi. Firenze, 1900. *Pensieri sulla scienza*, 19, 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* 14, 22, 23, 24, 92.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* 36-38, 41.

<sup>9</sup> Some of the humanists called him unlettered (*omo senza lettere*), and he calls them *gente stolta*, a foolish tribe.

been inwardly docile to either priesthood or tradition. In all his reflections upon philosophic and scientific themes he is, in the scientific sense, materialistic—that is, inductive, studious of experiment, insistent upon tangible data.<sup>1</sup> "Wisdom is daughter of experience";<sup>2</sup> "truth is the daughter of time";<sup>3</sup> "there is no effect in Nature without a reason";<sup>4</sup> "all our knowledge originates in sensations"<sup>5</sup>—such are the dicta he accumulates in an age of superstition heightened by the mutability of life, of ecclesiastical tyranny tempered only by indifferentism, of faith in astrology and amulets, of benumbing tradition in science and philosophy. On the problem of the phenomena of fossil shells he pronounces with a searching sagacity of inference<sup>6</sup> that seems to reveal at once the extent to which the advance of science has been blocked by pious obscurantism.<sup>7</sup> In all directions we see the great artist, a century before Bacon, anticipating Bacon's protests and questionings, and this with no such primary bias to religion as Bacon had acquired at his mother's knee. When he turns to the problems of body and spirit he is as dispassionate, as keenly speculative, as over those of external nature.<sup>8</sup> Of magic he is entirely contemptuous, not in the least on religious grounds, though he glances at these, but simply for the folly of it.<sup>9</sup> All that tells of religious feeling in him is summed up in a few utterances expressive of a vague theism;<sup>10</sup> while he has straight thrusts at religious fraud and absurdity.<sup>11</sup> It is indeed improbable that a mind so necessitated to discourse of its thought, however gifted for prudent silence, can have subsisted without private sympathy from kindred souls. Skepticism was admittedly abundant; and Leonardo of all men can least have failed to reckon with its motives.

Perhaps the most fashionable form of quasi-freethinking in the Italy of the fifteenth century was that which prevailed in the Platonic Academy of Florence in the period, though the chief founder of the Academy, Marsilio Ficino, wrote a defence of Christianity, and his most famous adherent, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, planned another. Renaissance Platonism began with the Greek Georgios Gemistos, surnamed Plethon because of his devotion to Plato, which was such as to scandalize common Christians and exasperate Aristotelians. The former had the real

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* 44, 46, 47, 48, 58, 60, 63, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* 57.

<sup>5</sup> *Ib.* 66. Cp. 67-69.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* *Pensieri sulla natura*, 80-86.

<sup>7</sup> Shortly after Leonardo we find Girolamo Fracastorio (1483-1553) developing the criticism further, and in particular disposing of the futile formula, resorted to by the scientific apriorists of the time, that the "plastic force of nature" created fossils like other things.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* *Pensieri sulla morale*, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.* 44, 45.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.* 46, 47.



grievance that his system ostensibly embodied polytheism and logically involved pantheism;<sup>1</sup> and one of his antagonists, Gennadios Georgios Sclarios, who became patriarch of Constantinople, caused his book *On Laws* to be burned;<sup>2</sup> but the allegation of his Aristotelian enemy and countryman, Georgios Trapezuntios, that he prayed to the sun as creator of the world,<sup>3</sup> is only one of the polemical amenities of the period. Ostensibly he was a believing Christian, stretching Christian love to accommodate the beliefs of Plato; but it was not zeal for orthodoxy that moved Cosimo dei Medici, at Florence, to embrace the new Platonism, and train up Marsilio Ficino to be its prophet. The *furor allegoricus* which inspired the whole school<sup>4</sup> was much more akin to ancient Gnosticism than to orthodox Christianity, and constantly points to pantheism<sup>5</sup> as the one philosophic solution of its ostensible polytheism. When, too, Ficino undertakes to vindicate Christianity against the unbelievers in his *Della Religione Cristiana*, "the most solid arguments that he can find in its favour are the answers of the Sibyls, and the prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ to be found in Virgil, Plato, Plotinus, and Porphyry."<sup>6</sup>

How far such a spirit of expatiation and speculation, however visionary and confused, tended to foster heresy is seen in the brief career of the once famous young Pico della Mirandola, Ficino's wealthy pupil. Parading a portentous knowledge of tongues<sup>7</sup> and topics at the age of twenty-four, he undertook (1486) to maintain a list of nine hundred *Conclusiones* or propositions at Rome against all comers, and to pay their expenses. Though he had obtained the permission of the Pope, Innocent VIII, the challenge speedily elicited angry charges of heresy against certain of the theses, and the Pope had to stop the proceedings and issue an ecclesiastical commission of inquiry. Some of the propositions were certainly ill adjusted to Catholic ideas, in particular the sayings that "neither the cross of Christ nor any image is to be adored *adoratione latræ*"—with worship; that no one believes what he believes merely because he wishes to; and that Jesus did not physically descend into hell.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 524, 541, notes; Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, i, 124. "It was easy to see by his words that he hoped for the restoration of the pagan religion" (*Id. Life of Savonarola*, Eng. tr. p. 51).

<sup>2</sup> Only a few fragments of it survive. Villari, *Life of Savonarola*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Carriere, *Philos. Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1847, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, i, 128-34.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Perrens, *Hist. de Florence (1434-1531)*, i, 258.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 257. Cp. Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 132; *Savonarola*, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> "Of the majority of the twenty-two languages he was supposed to have studied, he knew little more than the alphabet and the elements of grammar" (Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 135). As to Pico's character, which was not saintly, see Perrens, *Histoire* as cited, i, 561-62.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Greswell, *Memoirs of Politianus, Picus, etc.* 2nd ed. 1805, 235; McCrie, *The Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, p. 33, note.

Pico, retiring to Florence, defended himself in an *Apologia*, which provoked fresh outcry; whereupon he was summoned to proceed to Rome; and though the powerful friendship of Lorenzo dei Medici procured a countermand of the order, it was not till 1496 that he received, from Alexander VI, a full papal remission.

Among the unachieved projects of his later life, which ended at the age of thirty-one, was that of a treatise *Adversus Hostes Ecclesiæ*, to be divided into seven sections, the first dealing with "The avowed and open enemies of Christianity," and the second with "Atheists and those who reject every religious system upon their own reasoning"; and the others with Jews, Moslems, idolaters, heretics, and unrighteous believers.<sup>1</sup> The vogue of unbelief thus signified was probably increased by the whole speculative habit of Pico's own school,<sup>2</sup> which tended only less than Averroism to a pantheism subversive of the Christian creed. It is noteworthy that, while Ficino believed devoutly in astrology,<sup>3</sup> Pico rejected it, and left among his confused papers a treatise against it which his nephew contrived to transcribe and publish;<sup>4</sup> but it does not appear that this served either the cause of religion or that of science. The educated Italian world, while political independence lasted, remained in various degrees freethinking, pantheistic, and given to astrology, no school or teacher combining rationalism in philosophy with sound scientific methods.

One of the great literary figures of the later Renaissance, NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527), is the standing proof of the divorce of the higher intelligence of Italy from the faith as well as the cause of the Church before the Reformation. With this divorce he expressly charges the Church itself, giving as the first proof of its malfeasance that the peoples nearest Rome were the least religious.<sup>5</sup> To him the Church was the supreme evil in Italian politics,<sup>6</sup> the "stone in the wound." In a famous passage he gives his opinion that "our religion, having shown us the truth and the true way, makes us esteem less political honour (*l'onore del mondo*)"; and that whereas the pagan religion canonized only men crowned with public honour, as generals and statesmen, "our religion has glorified rather the humble and contemplative men than the active," placing the highest good in humility and abjection, teaching rather to suffer than to do, and so making the world debile and ready to be a prey

<sup>1</sup> Greswell, pp. 330-31.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. K. M. Sauer, *Gesch. der italien. Litteratur*, 1883, p. 109; Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 138.

<sup>3</sup> Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 133.

<sup>4</sup> *Discorsi sopra Tito Livio*, i, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Greswell, pp. 331-32.

<sup>6</sup> *Istorie fiorentine*, liv. i; *Discorsi*, i, 12.



to scoundrels.<sup>1</sup> The passage which follows, putting the blame on men for thus misreading their religion, is a fair sample of the grave mockery with which the men of that age veiled their unfaith.<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli was reputed in his own world an atheist;<sup>3</sup> and he certainly was no religionist. He indeed never avows atheism, but neither did any other writer of the epoch;<sup>4</sup> and the whole tenour of his writings is that of a man who had at least put aside the belief in a prayer-answering deity;<sup>5</sup> though, with the intellectual arbitrariness which still affected all the thought of his age, he avows a belief that all great political changes are heralded by prodigies, celestial signs, prophecies, or revelations<sup>6</sup>—here conforming to the ordinary superstition of his troublous time.

It belongs, further, to the manifold self-contradiction of the Renaissance that, holding none of the orthodox religious beliefs, he argues insistently and at length for the value and importance of religion, however untrue, as a means to political strength. Through five successive chapters of his *Discourses on Livy* he presses and illustrates his thesis, praising Numa as a sagacious framer of useful fictions, and as setting up new and false beliefs which made for the unification and control of the Roman people. The argument evolved with such strange candour is, of course, of the nature of so much Renaissance science, an *a priori* error: there was no lack of religious faith and fear in primitive Rome before the age of Numa; and the legend concerning him is a product of the very primordial mythopoiesis which Machiavelli supposes him to have set on foot. It is in the spirit of that fallacious theory of a special superinduced religiosity in Romans<sup>7</sup> that the great Florentine proceeds to charge the Church with having made the Italians religionless and vicious (*senza religione e cattivi*). Had he lived a century or two later he might have seen in the case of zealously believing Spain a completer political and social prostration than had fallen in his day on Italy,

<sup>1</sup> *Discorsi*, ii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> For another point of view see Owen, as cited, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> In the Italian translation of Bacon's essays, made for Bacon in 1618 by an English hand, Machiavelli is branded in one passage as an *impio*, and in another his name is dropped. See Routledge ed. of Bacon's *Works*, pp. 749, 751. The admiring Paolo Giovio called him *irrisor et atheos*; and Cardinal Pole said the *Prince* was so full of every kind of irreligion that it might have been written by the hand of Satan (Nourrisson, *Machiavel*, 1875, p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Burckhardt, pp. 499-500. Cp. Owen, pp. 165-68. It is thus impossible to be sure of the truth of the statement of Gregorovius (*Lucrezia Borgia*, Eng. tr. 1904, p. 25) that "There were no women skeptics or freethinkers; they would have been impossible in the society of that day." Where dissimulation of unbelief was necessarily habitual, there may have been some women unbelievers as well as many men.

<sup>5</sup> Owen's characterization of Machiavelli's *Asino d'oro* as a "satire on the freethought of his age" (p. 177) will not stand investigation. See his own note, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *Discorsi*, i, 56.

<sup>7</sup> As we saw, Polybius in his day took a similar view, coming as he did from Greece, where military failure had followed on a certain growth of unbelief. Machiavelli was much influenced by Polybius. Villari, ii, 9.

and this alongside of regeneration in an unbelieving France. But indeed it was the bitterness of spirit of a suffering patriot looking back yearningly to an idealized Rome, rather than the insight of the author of *The Prince*,<sup>1</sup> that inspired his reasoning on the political uses of religion; for at the height of his exposition he notes, with his keen eye for fact, how the most strenuous use of religious motive had failed to support the Samnites against the cool courage of Romans led by a rationalizing general;<sup>2</sup> and he notes, too, with a sardonic touch of hopefulness, how Savonarola had contrived to persuade the people of contemporary Florence that he had intercourse with deity.<sup>3</sup> Italy then had faith enough and to spare.

Such argument, in any case, even if untouched by the irony which tinges Machiavelli's, could never avail to restore faith; men cannot become believers on the motive of mere belief in the value of belief; and the total effect of Machiavelli's manifold reasoning on human affairs, with its startling lucidity, its constant insistence on causation, its tacit negation of every notion of Providence, must have been, in Italy as elsewhere, rather to prepare the way for inductive science than to rehabilitate supernaturalism, even among those who assented to his theory of Roman development. In his hands the method of science begins to emerge, turned to the most difficult of its tasks, before Copernicus had applied it to the simpler problem of the motion of the solar system. After centuries in which the name of Aristotle had been constantly invoked to small scientific purpose, this man of the world, who knew little or nothing of Aristotle's *Politics*,<sup>4</sup> exhibits the spirit of the true Aristotle for the first time in the history of Christendom; and it is in his land after two centuries of his influence that modern sociology begins its next great stride in the work of Vico.

He is to be understood, of course, as the product of the moral and intellectual experience of the Renaissance, which prepared his audience for him. Guicciardini, his contemporary, who in comparison was unblamed for irreligion, though an even warmer hater of the papacy, has left in writing the most explicit avowals of incredulity as to the current conceptions of the supernatural, and declares concerning miracles that as they occur in every religion they prove none.<sup>5</sup> At the same time he professes firm faith in Christianity;<sup>6</sup> and others who would not have joined him there were often as inconsistent in the ready belief they gave to magic

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tullio Massarani, *Studi di letteratura e d'arte*, 1899, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Discorsi*, i, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* i, 11, end.

<sup>4</sup> Villari, ii, 93-94.

<sup>5</sup> Burckhardt, p. 464; Owen, p. 180, and refs.

<sup>6</sup> Owen, p. 181. See the whole account of Guicciardini's rather confused opinions.



and astrology. The time was, after all, one of artistic splendour and scientific and critical ignorance;<sup>1</sup> and its freethought had the inevitable defects that ignorance entails. Thus the belief in the reality of witchcraft, sometimes discarded by churchmen,<sup>2</sup> is sometimes maintained by heretics. Rejected by John of Salisbury in the twelfth century, and by the freethinking Pietro of Abano in 1303, it was affirmed and established by Thomas Aquinas, asserted by Gregory IX, and made a motive for uncounted slaughters by the Inquisition. In 1460 a theologian had been forced to retract, and still punished, for expressing doubt on the subject; and in 1471 Pope Sixtus VI reserved to the papacy the privilege of making and selling the waxen models of limbs used as preservatives against enchantments. In the sixteenth century a whole series of books directed against the belief were put on the Index, and a Jesuit handbook codified the creed. Yet a Minorite friar, Alfonso Spina, pronounced it a heretical delusion, and taught that those burned suffered not for witchcraft but for heresy,<sup>3</sup> and on the other hand some men of a freethinking turn held it. Thus the progress of rational thought was utterly precarious.

Of the literary freethinking of the later Renaissance the most famous representative is POMPONAZZI, or Pomponatius (1462-1525), for whom it has been claimed that he "really initiated the philosophy of the Italian Renaissance."<sup>4</sup> The Italian Renaissance, however, was in reality near its turning-point when Pomponazzi's treatise on the Immortality of the Soul appeared (1516); and that topic was the commonest in the schools and controversies of that day.<sup>5</sup> He has been at times spoken of as an Averroïst, on the ground that he denied immortality; but he did so in reality as a disciple of Alexander of Aphrodisias, a rival commentator to Averroës. What is remarkable in his case is not the denial of immortality, which we have seen to be frequent in Dante's time, and more or less implicit in Averroïsm, but his contention that ethics could do very well without the belief<sup>6</sup>—a thing that it still took some courage to affirm, though the spectacle of the life of the faithful might have been supposed sufficient to win it a ready hearing. Presumably his rationalism, which made him challenge

<sup>1</sup> Though Italy had most of what scientific knowledge existed. Burckhardt, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> "A man might at the same time be condemned as a heretic in Spain for affirming, and in Italy for denying, the reality of the witches' nightly rides" (*The Pope and the Council*, p. 258).

<sup>3</sup> *The Pope and the Council*, pp. 249-61. It was another Spina who wrote on the other side.

<sup>4</sup> F. Fiorentino, *Pietro Pomponazzi*, 1868, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Owen, pp. 197-98; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 353-62; Christie, as cited, p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Owen, pp. 201, 218; Lange, i, 183-87 (tr. i, 220-25). He, however, granted that the mass of mankind, "brutish and materialized," needed the belief in heaven and hell to moralize them (Christie, pp. 140-41).

the then canonical authority of the scholasticized Aristotle, went further than his avowed doubts as to a future state; since his profession of obedience to the Church's teaching, and his reiteration of the old academic doctrine of two-fold truth—one truth for science and philosophy, and another for theology<sup>1</sup>—are as dubious as any in philosophic history.<sup>2</sup> Of him, or of Lorenzo Valla, more justly than of Petrarch, might it be said that he is the father of modern criticism, since Valla sets on foot at once historical and textual analysis, while Pomponazzi anticipates the treatment given to Biblical miracles by the rationalizing German theologians of the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> He too was a fixed enemy of the clergy; and it was not for lack of will that they failed to destroy him. He happened to be a personal favourite of Leo X, who saw to it that the storm of opposition to Pomponazzi—a storm as much of anger on behalf of Aristotle, who had been shown by him to doubt the immortality of the soul, as on behalf of Christianity—should end in an official farce of reconciliation.<sup>4</sup> He was however not free to publish his treatises, *De Incantationibus* and *De Fato, Libero Arbitrio, et Prædestinatione*. These, completed in 1520, were not printed till after his death, in 1556 and 1557;<sup>5</sup> and by reason of their greater simplicity, as well as of their less dangerous form of heresy, were much more widely read than the earlier treatise, thus contributing much to the spread of sane thought on the subjects of witchcraft, miracles, and special providences.

Whether his metaphysic on the subject of the immortality of the soul had much effect on popular thought may be doubted. What the Renaissance most needed in both its philosophic and its practical thought was a scientific foundation; and science, from first to last, was more hindered than helped by the environment. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, charges of necromancy against physicians and experimenters were frequently joined with imputations of heresy, and on such charges not a few were burned.<sup>6</sup> The economic conditions too were all unfavourable to solid research.

When Galileo in 1589 was made Professor of Mathematics at Pisa, his salary was only 60 scudi (= dollars), while the

<sup>1</sup> This principle, though deriving from Averroïsm, and condemned, as we have seen, by Pope John XXI, had been affirmed by so high an orthodox authority as Albertus Magnus. Cp. Owen, pp. 211-12, *note*. While thus officially recognized, it was of course denounced by the devout when they saw how it availed to save heretics from harm. Mr. Owen has well pointed out (p. 238) the inconsistency of the believers who maintain that faith is independent of reason, and yet denounce as blasphemous the profession to believe by faith what is not intelligible by philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Owen, p. 209, *note*. "Son école est une école de laïques, de médecins, d'esprits forts, de libres penseurs" (Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 3).

<sup>3</sup> Owen, p. 210; Christie, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Christie, pp. 141-47.

<sup>6</sup> Burckhardt, p. 291.



Professor of Medicine got 2,000. (Karl von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei*, Eng tr. 1879, p. 9.) At Padua, later, Galileo had 520 florins, with a prospect of rising to as many scudi. (Letter given in *The Private Life of Galileo*, Boston, 1870, p. 61.) The Grand Duke finally gave him a pension of 1,000 scudi at Florence. (*Id.* p. 64.) This squares with Bacon's complaint (*Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. ii, ch. i—*Works*, Routledge ed. pp. 76, 422-23) that, especially in England, the salaries of lecturers in arts and professions were injuriously small, and that, further, "among so many noble foundations of colleges in Europe.....they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to the study of arts and sciences at large." In Italy, however, philosophy was fairly well endowed. Pomponazzi received a salary of 900 Bolognese lire when he obtained the chair of Philosophy at Bologna in 1509. (Christie, essay cited, p. 138.)

Medicine was nearly as dogmatic as theology. Even philosophy was in large part shouldered aside by the financial motives which led men to study law in preference;<sup>1</sup> and when the revival of ancient literature gained ground it absorbed energy to the detriment of scientific study,<sup>2</sup> the wealthy amateurs being ready to pay high prices for manuscripts of classics, and for classical teaching; but not for patient investigation of natural fact. The humanists, so-called, were often forces of enlightenment and reform; witness such a type as the high-minded POMPONIO LETO (Pomponius Laetus), pupil and successor of Lorenzo Valla, and one of the many "pagan" scholars of the later Renaissance;<sup>3</sup> but the discipline of mere classical culture was insufficient to make them, as a body, qualified leaders either of thought or action,<sup>4</sup> in such a society as that of decaying Italy. Only after the fall of Italian liberties, the decay of the Church's wealth and power, the loss of commerce, and the consequent decline of the arts, did men turn to truly scientific pursuits. From Italy, indeed, long after the Reformation, came a new stimulus to freethought which affected all the higher civilization of northern Europe. But the failure to solve the political problem, a failure which led to the Spanish tyranny, meant the establishment of bad conditions for the intellectual as for the social life; and an arrest of freethought in Italy was a necessary accompaniment of the arrest of the higher literature. What remained was the afterglow of a great and energetic period rather than a spirit of inquiry; and we find the

<sup>1</sup> Gebhart, pp. 59-63; Burckhardt, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, pp. 279-80; Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt, pt. iii, ch. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Burckhardt, p. 291.

old Averroist scholasticism, in its most pedantic form, lasting at the university of Padua till far into the seventeenth century. "A philosophy," remarks in this connection an esteemed historian, "a mode of thought, a habit of mind, may live on in the lecture-rooms of Professors for a century after it has been abandoned by the thinkers, the men of letters, and the men of the world."<sup>1</sup> The avowal has its bearings nearer home than Padua.

While it lasted, the light of Italy had shone upon all the thought of Europe. Not only the other nations but the scholars of the Jewish race reflected it; for to the first half of the sixteenth century belongs the Jew Menahem Asariah de Rossi, whose work, *Meor Enayim*, "Light of the Eyes," is "the first attempt by a Jew to submit the statements of the Talmud to a critical examination, and to question the value of tradition in its historical records." And he did not stand alone among the Jews of Italy; for, while Elijah Delmedigo, at the end of the fifteenth century, was in a didactic Maimonist fashion doubtful of literary tradition, his grandson, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, flourishing early in the seventeenth century, "wrote various pamphlets of a deeply skeptical character."<sup>2</sup> That this movement of Jewish rationalism should be mainly limited to the south was inevitable, since there only were Jewish scholars in an intellectual environment. There could be no better testimony to the higher influence of the Italian Renaissance.

## § 2. The French Evolution

In the other countries influenced by Italian culture in the sixteenth century the rationalist spirit had various fortune. France, as we saw, had substantially retrograded at the time of the Italian new-birth, her revived militarism no less than her depression by the English conquests having deeply impaired her intellectual life in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus the true renaissance of letters in France began late, and went on during the Reformation period; and all along it showed a tincture of freethought. From the midst of the group who laid the foundations of French Protestantism by translations of the Bible there comes forth the most articulate freethinker of that age, BONAVENTURE DESPERIERS, author of the *Cymbalum Mundi* (1537). Early associated with Calvin and Olivetan in revising the translation of the Bible by

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 265. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, Avert.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, pp. 213, 420-21.



Lefèvre d'Étaples (rev. 1535), Desperiers turned away from the Protestant movement, as did Rabelais and Étienne Dolet, caring as little for the new presbyter as for the old priest; and all three were duly accused by the Protestants of atheism and *libertinage*.<sup>1</sup> In the same year Desperiers aided Dolet, scholar and printer, to produce his much-praised *Commentarii linguæ latinæ*; and within two years he had printed his own satire, *Cymbalum Mundi*,<sup>2</sup> wherein, by way of pagan dialogues, are allegorically ridiculed the Christian scheme, its miracles, Bible contradictions, and the spirit of persecution, then in full fire in France against the Protestants. In the first dialogue Mercury is sent to Athens by Zeus the Father to have the "Book of the Destinies" rebound—an adaptation of an ancient sarcasm against the Christians by Celsus.<sup>3</sup> He, robbing others, is robbed of the book, and another (=the New Testament) is put in its place. In the second dialogue figure Rhetulus (=Lutherus) and Cubercus (=Bucerus?), who suppose they have found the main pieces of the philosopher's stone, which Mercury had broken and scattered in the sand of the theatre arena. Protestants and Catholics are thus alike ridiculed. The allegory is not always clear to modern eyes; but there was no question then about its general bearing; and Desperiers, though groom of the chamber (after Clement Marot) to Marguerite of France (later of Navarre), had to fly for his life, as Marot did before him. The first edition of his book, secretly printed at Paris, was seized and destroyed; and the second (1538), printed for him at Lyons, whither he had taken his flight, seems to have had a similar fate. From that time he disappears, probably dying, whether or not by suicide is doubtful,<sup>4</sup> before 1544, when his miscellaneous works were published. They include his *Œuvres Diverses*—many of them graceful poems addressed to his royal mistress, Marguerite—which, with his verse translation of the *Andria* of Terence and his *Discours non plus Melancoliques que Divers*, make up his small body of work. In the *Discours* may be seen applied to matters of history and scholarship the same critical spirit that utters itself in the *Cymbalum*, and the same literary gift; but for orthodoxy his

<sup>1</sup> Notice of Bonaventure Desperiers, by Bibliophile Jacob [i.e. Lacroix], in 1841 ed. of *Cymbalum Mundi*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For a solution of the enigma of the title see the *Clef* of Eloi Johanneau in ed. cited, p. 83. *Cymbalum mundi* was a nickname given in antiquity to (among others) an Alexandrian grammarian called Didymus—the name of doubting Thomas in the gospel. The book is dedicated by Thomas Du Clevier à son ami Pierre Tyrocan, which is found to be, with one letter altered (perhaps by a printer's error), an anagram for Thomas Incrédule à son ami Pierre Croyant, "Unbelieving Thomas to his friend Believing Peter." *Clef* cited, pp. 80-85.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, vi, 78.

<sup>4</sup> The readiness of piety in all ages to invent frightful deaths for unbelievers must be remembered in connection with this and other records. Cp. Notice cited, p. xx, and note. The authority for this is Henri Estienne, *Apologie pour Herodote*, liv. i, chs. 18, end, and 26.

name became a hissing and a byword, and it is only in modern times that French scholarship has recognized in Desperiers the true literary comrade and potential equal of Rabelais and Marot.<sup>1</sup> The age of Francis was too inclement for such literature as his *Cymbalum*; and it was much that it spared Gringoire (d. 1544), who, without touching doctrine, satirized in his verse both priests and Protestants.

It is something of a marvel, further, that it spared RABELAIS (? 1493-1553), whose enormous raillery so nearly fills up the literary vista of the age for modern retrospect. It has been said by a careful student that "the free and universal inquiry, the philosophic doubt, which were later to work the glory of Descartes, proceed from Rabelais";<sup>2</sup> and it is indeed an impression of boundless intellectual curiosity and wholly unfettered thinking that is set up by his entire career. Sent first to the convent school of La Baumette, near Angers, he had there as a schoolfellow Geoffroy d'Estissac, afterwards his patron as Bishop of Maillezais. Sent later to the convent school of Fontenay-le-Comte, he had the luck to have for schoolfellows there the four famous brothers Du Bellay, so well able to protect him in later life; and, forced to spend fifteen years of his young life (1509-24) at Fontenay as a Franciscan monk, he turned the time to account by acquiring an immense erudition, including a knowledge of Greek, then rare.<sup>3</sup> Naturally the book-lover was not popular among his fellow-monks; and his Greek books were actually confiscated by the chapter, who found in his cell certain writings of Erasmus,<sup>4</sup> to whom as a scholar he afterwards expressed the deepest intellectual obligations. Thereafter, by the help of his friend d'Estissac, now bishop of the diocese, Rabelais received papal permission to join the order of the Benedictines and to enter the Abbey of Maillezais as a canon regular (1524); but soon after, though he was thus a fully-ordained priest, we find him broken loose, and living for some six years a life of wandering freedom as a secular priest, sometimes with his friend the bishop, winning friends in high places by his learning and his gaiety, everywhere studying and observing. At the bishop's priory of Ligugé he seems to have studied hard and widely. In 1530 he is found at Montpellier, extending his studies in medicine, in which he speedily won distinc-

<sup>1</sup> So Charles Nodier, cited in the Notice by Bibliophile Jacob, pp. xxiii-xxiv. The English translator of 1723 professed to see no unbelief in the book.

<sup>2</sup> Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au XVIIe siècle*, 1896, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Notice historique in Bibliophile Jacob's ed. of Rabelais, 1841; Stapfer, *Rabelais*, pp. 6, 10; W. F. Smith, biog. not. to his trans. of Rabelais, 1893, i, p. xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Rathery, notice biog. to ed. of Burgaud des Marets, i, 12. Jacob's account of his relations with his friends Budé and Amy at this stage is erroneous. See Rathery, p. 14.



tion, becoming B.M. on December 1, and a lecturer in the following year. He was later esteemed one of the chief anatomists of his day, being one of the first to dissect the human body and to insist on the need of such training for physicians;<sup>1</sup> and in 1532<sup>2</sup> we find him characterized as the "true great universal spirit of this time."<sup>3</sup> In the same year he published at Lyons, where he was appointed physician to the chief hospital, an edition of the Latin letters of the Ferrarese physician Manardi; and his own commentaries on Galen and Hippocrates, which had a very poor sale.<sup>4</sup> At Lyons he made the acquaintance of Dolet, Marot, and Desperiers; and his letter (of the same year) to Erasmus (printed as addressed to Bernard de Salignac<sup>5</sup>) showed afresh how his intellectual sympathies went.

About 1532 he produced his *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, the first two books of his great humoristic romance; and in 1533 began his series of almanacks, continued till 1550, presumably as printer's hack-work. From the fragments which have been preserved, they appear to have been entirely serious in tone, one containing a grave theistic protest against all astrological prediction. Along with the almanack of 1533, however, he produced a *Pantagruelian Prognostication*; and this, which alone has been preserved entire,<sup>6</sup> passes hardly ridicule on astrology,<sup>7</sup> one of the most popular superstitions of the day, among high and low alike. Almost immediately the Sorbonne was on his track, condemning his *Pantagruel* in 1533.<sup>8</sup> A journey soon afterwards to Rome, in the company of his friend Bishop Jean du Bellay, the French ambassador, may have saved him some personal experience of persecution. Two years later, when the Bishop went to Rome to be made cardinal, Rabelais again accompanied him; and he appears to have been a favourite alike with Pope Clement VII and Paul III. At the end of 1535 we find him, in a letter to his patron, the bishop of Maillezais, scoffing at the astrological leanings of the new Pope, Paul III.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, upon a formal *Supplicatio pro apostasia*, he obtained from the Pope in 1536 an absolution for his breach of his monastic vows, with permission to practise medicine in a Benedictine monastery. Shortly before, his little son Théodule had died;<sup>10</sup> and it may have been grief that inspired such a desire: in any case, the papal

<sup>1</sup> Le Double, *Rabelais anatomiste et physiologiste*, 1889, pp. 12, 425; and pref. by Professor Duval, p. xiii; Stapfer, p. 42; A. Tilley, *François Rabelais*, 1907, pp. 74-76.

<sup>2</sup> In the same year he was induced to publish what turned out to be two spurious documents purporting to be ancient Roman remains. See Heulhard, *Rabelais légiste*, and Jacob, *Notice*, p. xviii.

<sup>3</sup> As to this see Tilley, p. 53. <sup>4</sup> See it at the end of the ed. of Bibliophile Jacob.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Stapfer, pp. 24-25; Rathery, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Rathery, p. 30. <sup>7</sup> Cp. Jacob, *Notice*, p. xxxviii; Smith, ii, 524.

<sup>8</sup> Rathery, p. 71; Stapfer, pp. 42-43.

permission to turn monk again was never used,<sup>1</sup> though the pardon was doubtless serviceable. Taking his degree as doctor at Montpellier in May, 1537, he there lectured for about a year on anatomy; and in the middle of 1538 he recommenced a wandering life,<sup>2</sup> practising in turn at Narbonne, Castres, and Lyons. Then, after becoming a Benedictine canon of St. Maur in 1540, we find him in Piedmont from 1540 to 1543, under the protection of the viceroy, Guillaume de Bellay.<sup>3</sup>

During this period the frequent reprints of the first two books of his main work, though never bearing his name, brought upon him the denunciations alike of priests and Protestants. Ramus, perhaps in revenge for being caricatured as Raminagrobis, pronounced him an atheist.<sup>4</sup> Calvin, who had once been his friend, had in his book *De Scandalis* angrily accused him of *libertinage*, profanity, and atheism; and henceforth, like Desperiers, he was about as little in sympathy with Protestantism as with the zealots of Rome.

Thus assailed, Rabelais had seen cause, in an edition of 1542, to modify a number of the hardier utterances in the original issues of the first two books of his *Pantagruel*, notably his many epithets aimed at the Sorbonne.<sup>5</sup> In the reprints there are substituted for Biblical names some drawn from heathen mythology; expressions too strongly savouring of Calvinism are withdrawn; and disrespectful allusions to the kings of France are elided. In his concern to keep himself safe with the Sorbonne he even made a rather unworthy attack<sup>6</sup> (1542) on his former friend Étienne Dolet for the mere oversight of reprinting one of his books without deleting passages which Rabelais had expunged;<sup>7</sup> but no expurgation could make his *évangile*, as he called it,<sup>8</sup> a Christian treatise, or keep for him an orthodox reputation; and it was with much elation that he obtained in 1545 from King Francis—whose private reader was his friend Duchâtel, Bishop of Tulle—a privilege to print the third book

<sup>1</sup> Stapfer, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob, p. xxxix.

<sup>3</sup> Rathery, pp. 44-49. The notion of Lacroix, that Rabelais visited England, has no evidence to support it. Cp. Rathery, p. 49, and Smith, p. xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Jacob, p. lx. Ramus himself, for his attacks on the authority of Aristotle, was called an atheist. Cp. Waddington, *Ramus, sa vie*, etc., 1855, p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> See the list in the avertissement of M. Burgaud des Marets to éd. Firmin Didot. Cp. Stapfer, pp. 63, 64. For example, the "theologian" who makes the ludicrous speech in Liv. i, ch. xix, becomes (chs. 18 and 20) a "sophist"; and the *sorbonistes*, *sorbonicoles*, and *sorbonagres* of chs. 20 and 21 become mere *maîtres*, *magistres*, and *sophistes* likewise.

<sup>6</sup> It is doubtful whether Rabelais wrote the whole of the notice prefixed to the next edition, in which this attack was made; but it seems clear that he "had a hand in it" (Tilley, *François Rabelais*, p. 87).

<sup>7</sup> R. Christie, *Étienne Dolet*, pp. 369-72. Christie, in his vacillating way, severely blames Dolet, and then admits that the book may have been printed while Dolet was in prison, and that in any case there was no malice in the matter. This point, and the persistent Catholic calumnies against Dolet, are examined by the author in art. "The Truth about Étienne Dolet," in *National Reformer*, June 2 and 9, 1889.

<sup>8</sup> *Epître*, pref. to Liv. iv. Ed. Jacob, p. 318.



of *Pantagruel*, which he issued in 1546, signed for the first time with his name, and prefaced by a cry of jovial defiance to the "petticoated devils" of the Sorbonne. They at once sought to convict him of fresh blasphemies; but even the thrice-repeated substitution of an *n* for an *m* in *âme*, making "ass" out of "soul," was carried off, by help of Bishop Duchâtel, as a printer's error; and the king, having laughed like other readers, maintained the imprimatur. But although it gave Rabelais formal leave to reprint the first and second books, he was careful for the time not to do so, leaving the increasing risk to be run by whoso would.

It was on the death of Francis in 1547 that Rabelais ran his greatest danger, having to fly to Metz, where for a time he acted as salaried physician of the city. About this time he seems to have written the fourth and fifth books of *Pantagruel*; and to the treatment he had suffered at Catholic hands has been ascribed the reversion to Calvinistic ideas noted in the fifth book.<sup>1</sup> In 1549, however, on the birth of a son to Henri II, his friend Cardinal Bellay returned to power, and Rabelais to court favour with him. The derider of astrology did not scruple to cast a prosperous horoscope for the infant prince—justifying by strictly false predictions his own estimate of the art, since the child died in the cradle. There was now effected the dramatic scandal of the appointment of Rabelais in 1550 to two parish cures, one of which, Meudon, has given him his most familiar *sobriquet*. He seems to have left both to be served by vicars;<sup>2</sup> but the wrath of the Church was so great that early in 1552 he resigned them;<sup>3</sup> proceeding immediately afterwards to publish the fourth book of *Pantagruel*, for which he had duly obtained official privilege. As usual, the Sorbonne rushed to the pursuit; and the Parlement of Paris forbade the sale of the book despite the royal permission. That permission, however, was reaffirmed; and this, the most audacious of all the writings of Rabelais, went forth freely throughout France, carrying the war into the enemies' camp, and assailing alike Protestants and churchmen. In the following year, his work done, he died.

It is difficult to estimate the intellectual effect of his performance, which was probably much greater at the end of the century than during his life. Patericke, the English translator

<sup>1</sup> Cp. W. F. Smith's trans. of Rabelais, 1893, ii, p. x. In this book, however, other hands have certainly been at work. Rabelais left it unfinished.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob, *Notice*, p. lxiii; Stapfer, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> So Rathery, p. 60; and Stapfer, p. 78. Jacob, p. lxii, says he resigned only one. Rathery makes the point clear by giving a copy of the act of resignation as to Meudon.

of Gentillet's famous *Discours* against Machiavelli (1576), points to Rabelais among the French and Agrippa (an odd parallel) among the Germans as the standard-bearers of the whole train of atheists and scoffers. "Little by little, that which was taken in the beginning for jests turned to earnest, and words into deeds."<sup>1</sup> Rabelais's vast innuendoes by way of jests about the people of *Ruach* (the Spirit) who lived solely on wind;<sup>2</sup> his quips about the "reverend fathers in devil," of the "diabological faculty";<sup>3</sup> his narratives about the *Papefigues* and *Papimanes*;<sup>4</sup> and his gibes at the Decretals,<sup>5</sup> were doubtless enjoyed by many good Catholics otherwise placated by his attacks on the "demoniacal Calvins, impostors of Geneva";<sup>6</sup> and so careful was he on matters of dogma that it remains impossible to say with confidence whether or not he finally believed in a future state.<sup>7</sup> That he was a deist or Unitarian seems the reasonable inference as to his general creed;<sup>8</sup> but there also he throws out no negations—even indicates a genial contempt for the *philosophe ephectique et pyrrhonien*<sup>9</sup> who opposes a halting doubt to two contrary doctrines. In any case, he was anathema to the heresy-hunters of the Sorbonne, and only powerful protection could have saved him.

Dolet (1508–1546) was certainly much less of an unbeliever<sup>10</sup> than Rabelais;<sup>11</sup> but where Rabelais could with ultimate impunity ridicule the whole machinery of the Church,<sup>12</sup> Dolet, after several iniquitous prosecutions, in which his jealous rivals in the printing business took part, was finally done to death in priestly revenge<sup>13</sup> for his youthful attack on the religion of inquisitorial Toulouse, where gross pagan superstition and gross orthodoxy went hand in hand.<sup>14</sup> He certainly "lived a life of sturt and strife." Born at Orléans, he studied in his boyhood at Paris; later at Padua, under Simon Villanovanus, whom he heard converse with Sir Thomas More; then, at 21, for a year at Venice, where he was secretary to Langeac, the French Bishop of Limoges. It was at Toulouse,

<sup>1</sup> *A Discourse.....against Nicholas Machiavel*, Eng. tr. (1577), ed. 1608, Epist. ded. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Liv. iv, ch. xliii.

<sup>3</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Liv. iv, ch. xlv-xlviii.

<sup>5</sup> Liv. iv, ch. xlix sq.

<sup>6</sup> Liv. iv, ch. xxxii.

<sup>7</sup> Prof. Stapfer, *Rabelais, sa personne, son génie, son œuvre*, 1889, pp. 365–68. Cp. the *Notice* of Bibliophile Jacob, ed. 1841 of Rabelais, pp. lvii–lviii; and Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 39. In his youth he affirmed the doctrine. Stapfer, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. René Millet, *Rabelais*, 1892, pp. 172–80.

<sup>9</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xxxvi.

<sup>10</sup> The description of him by one French biographer, M. Boulmier (*Estienne Dolet*, 1857), as "le Christ de la pensée libre" is a gross extravagance. Dolet was substantially orthodox, and even anti-Protestant, though he denounced the cruel usage of Protestants.

<sup>11</sup> Wallace (*Antitrinitarian Biography*, 1850, ii, 2) asserts that Dolet "not only became a convert to the opinions of Servetus, but a zealous propagator of them." For this there is not a shadow of evidence.

<sup>12</sup> Cp. Voltaire, *Lettres sur Rabelais*, etc. i.

<sup>13</sup> Cp. author's art. above cited; R. C. Christie, *Estienne Dolet*, 2nd ed. 1899, p. 100. Octave Galtier, *Estienne Dolet* (N.D.), pp. 66, 94, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Christie, as cited, pp. 50–58, 105–106; Galtier, p. 26 sq.



where he went in 1532 to study law, that he began his quarrels and his troubles. In that year, and in that town, the young Jean de Caturce, a lecturer in the school of law, was burned alive on a trivial charge of heresy; and Dolet witnessed the tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Previously there had been a wholesale arrest of suspected Lutherans—"advocates, procureurs, ecclesiastics of all sorts, monks, friars, and curés."<sup>2</sup> Thirty-two saved themselves by flight; but among those arrested was Jean de Boysonne, the most learned and the ablest professor in the university, much admired by Rabelais,<sup>3</sup> and afterwards the most intimate friend of Dolet. It was his sheer love of letters that brought upon him the charge of heresy;<sup>4</sup> but he was forced publicly to abjure ten Lutheran heresies charged upon him. The students of the time were divided in the old fashion into "nations," and formed societies as such; and Dolet, chosen in 1534 as "orator" of the "French" group, as distinct from the Gascons and the Tolosans, in the course of a quarrel of the societies delivered two Latin orations, in one of which he vilipended alike the cruelty and the superstitions of Toulouse. A number of the leading bigots of the place were attacked; and Dolet was after an interval of some months thrown into prison, charged with exciting a riot and with contempt of the Parlement of Toulouse. His incarceration did not last long; but never thereafter was he safe; and in the remaining thirteen years of his life he was five more times in prison, for nearly five years in all.<sup>5</sup>

After he had settled at Lyons, and produced his *Commentaries*, he had the bad fortune to kill an enemy who drew sword upon him; and the pardon he obtained from the king through the influence of Marguerite of Navarre remained technically unratified for six years, during which time he was only provisionally at liberty, being actually in prison for a short time in 1537. Apart from this episode he showed himself both quarrelsome and vainglorious, alienating friends who had done much for him; but his enemies were worse spirits than he. The power of the man drove him to perpetual production no less than to strife; and his mere activity as a printer went far to destroy him.

"No calling was more hateful to the friends of bigotry and superstition than that of a printer" (Christie, as cited, p. 387). Nearly all the leading printers of France and Germany were either avowedly in sympathy with Protestant heresy or sus-

<sup>1</sup> It is to this that Rabelais alludes (ii, 5) when he tells how at Toulouse they "stuck not to burn their regents alive like red herrings."

<sup>2</sup> Christie, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xxix.

<sup>4</sup> Christie, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> One of his enemies wrote of him that prison was his country—*patria Doleti*.

pected of being so (*id.* p. 388); and the issue of an edict by King Francis in 1535 for the suppression of printing was at the instance of the Sorbonne. We shall see that in Germany the support of the printers, and their hostility to the priests and monks, contributed greatly to the success of Lutheranism.

In 1542 he was indicted as a heretic, but really for publishing Protestant books of devotion and French translations of the Bible. Among the formal offences charged were: (1) his having in his *Cato Christianus* cited as the second commandment the condemnation of all images; (2) his use of the term "fate" in the sense of predestination; (3) his substitution of *habeo fidem* for *credo*; (4) the eating of flesh in Lent; and (5) the act of taking a walk during the performance of mass.<sup>1</sup> On this indictment the two inquisitors Orry and Faye delivered him over to the secular arm for execution. Again he secured the King's pardon (1543), through the mediation of Pierre Duchâtel, the good Bishop of Tulle; but the ecclesiastical resistance was such that, despite Dolet's formal recantation, it required a more plenary pardon, the express orders of the King, and three official letters to secure his release after a year's detention.<sup>2</sup>

That was, however, swiftly followed by a final and successful prosecution. By a base device two parcels were made of prohibited books printed by Dolet and of Protestant books issued at Geneva; and these, bearing his name in large, were forwarded to Paris. The parcels were seized, and he was again arrested, early in January, 1544. He contrived to escape to Piedmont; but, returning secretly after six months to print documents of defence, he was discovered and sent to prison in Paris. The last pardon having covered all previous writings, the prosecutors sought in his translation of the pseudo-Platonic dialogues *Axiochus* and *Hipparchus*, printed with his last vindication; and, finding a slight over-emphasis of Sokrates's phrase describing the death of the body ("thou shalt no longer be," rendered by "thou shalt no longer be anything at all"), pronounced this a wilful propounding of a heresy, though in fact there had been no denial of the doctrine of immortality.<sup>3</sup> This time the prey was held. After Dolet had been in prison for twenty months the Parlement of Paris ratified the sentence of death; and he was burned alive on August 3, 1546. The utter wickedness of the whole process<sup>4</sup> at least serves to relieve by neighbourhood the darkness of the stains cast on Protestantism by the crimes of Calvin.

<sup>1</sup> *Procès d'Estienne Dolet*, Paris, 1836, p. 11; Galtier, pp. 65-70; Christie, pp. 399-90.

<sup>2</sup> *Procès*, p. viii.; Galtier, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> Galtier, p. 101 sq.; Christie, p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> A modern French judge, the President Baudrier, was found to affirm that the laws, though "unduly severe," were "neither unduly nor unfairly pressed" against Dolet! Christie, p. 471.



The whole of the clerical opposition to the new learning at this period is not unjustly to be characterized as a malignant cabal of ignorance against knowledge. In Germany as in France real learning was substantially on the side of the persecuted writers. When, in March of 1537, Dolet was entertained at a banquet to celebrate the pardon granted to him by the king for his homicide at Lyons on the last day of the previous year, there came to it, by Dolet's own account, the chief lights of learning in France—Budé, the chief Greek scholar of his time; Berauld, his nearest compeer; Danès and Toussain, both pupils of Budé and the first royal professors of Greek at Paris; Marot, "the French Maro"; Rabelais, then regarded as a great new light in medicine; Voulte,<sup>1</sup> and others. The men of enlightenment at first instinctively drew together, recognizing that on all hands they were surrounded by rabid enemies, who were the enemies of knowledge. But soon the stresses of the time drove them asunder. Voulte, who in this year was praising Rabelais in Latin epigrams, was attacking him in the next as an impious disciple of Lucian;<sup>2</sup> and, after having warmly befriended Dolet, was impeaching him, not without cause, as an ingrate. It was an age of passion and violence; and Voulte was himself assassinated in 1542 "by a man who had been unsuccessful in a law-suit against him."<sup>3</sup>

Infamous as was the cruelty with which Dolet was persecuted to the death, his execution was but a drop in the sea of blood then being shed in France by the Church. The king, sinking under his maladies, had become the creature of the priests, who in defiance of the Chancellor obtained his signature (1545) to a decree for a renewed persecution of the heretics of the Vaudois; and an army, followed by a Catholic mob and accompanied by the papal vice-legat of Avignon, burst upon the doomed territory and commenced to burn and slay. Women captured were violated and then thrown over precipices; and twice over, when a multitude of fugitives in a fortified place surrendered on the assurance that their lives and property would be spared, the commander ordered that all should be put to death. When old soldiers refused to enact such an infamy, others joyfully obeyed, the mob aiding; and among the women were committed, as usual, "all the crimes of which hell could dream." Three towns were destroyed, 3,000 persons massacred, 256 executed, six or seven hundred more sent to the galleys,

<sup>1</sup> Concerning whom see Christie, as cited, pp. 29-31.  
<sup>2</sup> Tilley, as last cited, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Christie, p. 317.

and many children sold as slaves.<sup>1</sup> Thus was the faith vindicated and safeguarded.

Of the freethought of such an age there could be no adequate record. Its tempestuous energy, however, implies not a little of private unbelief; and at a time when in England, two generations behind France in point of literary evolution, there was, as we shall see, a measure of rationalism among religionists, there must have been at least as much in the land of Rabelais and Desperiers. The work of Guillaume Postell, *De causis seu principiis et originibus Naturæ contra Atheos*, published in 1552, testifies to kinds of unbelief that outwent the doubt of Rabelais; though Postell's general extravagance discounts all of his utterances. It is said of Guillaume Pellicier (1527-1568), Bishop of Montpellier, who first turned Protestant and afterwards, according to Gui Patin, atheist, that he would have been burned but for the fact of his consecration.<sup>2</sup> And the English chroniclers preserve a scandal concerning an anonymous atheist, worded as follows: "1539. This yeare, in October, died in the Universitie of Parris, in France, a great doctor, which said their was no God, and had bene of that opinion synce he was twentie yeares old, and was above fouerscore yeares olde when he died. And all that tyme had kept his error secrett, and was esteemed for one of the greatest clarkes in all the Universitie of Parris, and his sentence was taken and holden among the said studentes as firme as scripture, which shewed, when he was asked why he had not shewed his opinion till his death, he answered that for feare of death he durst not, but when he knew that he should die he said their was no lief to come after this lief, and so died miserably to his great damnation."<sup>3</sup>

Among the eminent ones then surmised to lean somewhat to unbelief was the sister of King Francis, Marguerite of Navarre, whom we have noted as a protectress of the pantheistic *Libertini*, denounced by Calvin. She is held to have been substantially skeptical until her forty-fifth year;<sup>4</sup> though her final religiousness seems also beyond doubt.<sup>5</sup> In her youth she bravely protected the Protestants from the first persecution of 1523 onwards; and the strongly Protestant drift of her *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* exasperated the Catholic theologians; but after the Protestant violences of 1546 she seems to have sided with her brother against the

<sup>1</sup> Christie, as cited, pp. 465-67; Lutteroth, *La Réformation en France pendant sa première période*, 1859, pp. 39-40; Prof. H. M. Baird, *Rise of the Huguenots*, 1880, i, 240 sq.  
<sup>2</sup> Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 43; Patin, *Lettres*, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, i, 210.  
<sup>3</sup> Wriothesley's Chronicle (Camden Society, 1875), pp. 107-108.  
<sup>4</sup> Nodier, quoted by Bibliophile Jacob in ed. of *Cymbalum Mundi*, as cited, p. xviii.  
<sup>5</sup> Cp. Brantôme, *Des dames illustres*. Œuvres, ed. 1838, ii, 186.



Reform.<sup>1</sup> The strange taste of the *Heptaméron*, of which again her part-authorship seems certain,<sup>2</sup> constitutes a moral paradox not to be solved save by recognizing in her a woman of genius, whose alternate mysticism and bohemianism expressed a very ancient duality in human nature.

A similar mixture will explain the intellectual life of the poet Ronsard. A persecutor of the Huguenots,<sup>3</sup> he was denounced as an atheist by two of their ministers;<sup>4</sup> and the pagan fashion in which he handled Christian things scandalized his own side, albeit he was hostile to Rabelais. But though the spirit of the French Renaissance, so eagerly expressed in the *Défense et Illustration de la langue françoise* of Joachim du Bellay (1549), is at its outset as emancipated as that of the Italian, we find Ronsard in his latter years edifying the pious.<sup>5</sup> Any ripe and consistent rationalism, indeed, was then impossible. One of the most powerful minds of the age was BODIN (1530-1596), whose *République* is one of the most scientific treatises on government between Aristotle and our own age, and whose *Colloquium Heptaplomeres*<sup>6</sup> is no less original an outline of a naturalist<sup>7</sup> philosophy. It consists of six dialogues, in which seven men take part, setting forth the different religious standpoints of Jew, Christian, pagan, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Catholic, the whole leading up to a doctrine of tolerance and universalism. Bodin was repeatedly and emphatically accused of unbelief by friends and foes;<sup>8</sup> and his rationalism on some heads is beyond doubt; yet he not only held by the belief in witchcraft, but wrote a furious treatise in support of it;<sup>9</sup> and he dismissed the system of Copernicus as too absurd for discussion.<sup>10</sup> He also formally vetoes all discussion on faith, declaring it to be dangerous to religion;<sup>11</sup> and by these conformities he probably saved himself from eccle-

<sup>1</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE (the First), notes F and G.

<sup>2</sup> Bayle, note N. Cp. Nodier, as cited, p. xix, as to the collaboration of Desperiers and others.

<sup>3</sup> Bayle, art. RONSARD, note D.

<sup>4</sup> Garasse, *La Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits de ce Temps*, 1623, pp. 126-27. Ronsard replied to the charge in his poem, *Des misères du temps*.

<sup>5</sup> Bayle, art. RONSARD, note O. Cp. Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> MS. 1588. First printed in 1841 by Gubrauer, again in 1857 by L. Noack.

<sup>7</sup> As before noted, he was one of the first to use the word. Cp. Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, pp. 31, 455, notes.

<sup>8</sup> Bayle, art. BODIN, note O. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. p. 424; and the *Lettres de Gui Patin*, iii, 679 (letter of 27 juillet, 1668), cited by Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 43. Leibnitz, in an early letter to Jac. Thomassius, speaks of the MS. of the *Colloquium*, then in circulation, as proving its writer to be "the professed enemy of the Christian religion," adding: "Vanini's dialogues are a trifle in comparison." (*Philosophische Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i, 26; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 77.) Carrière, however, notes (*Weltanschauung*, p. 317) that in later years Leibnitz learned to prize Bodin's treatise highly.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 66, 87-91. In the *République* too he has a chapter on astrology, to which he leans somewhat.

<sup>10</sup> *République*, Liv. iv, ch. ii.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* Liv. iv, ch. vii. "Bodin in this sophistry was undoubtedly insincere" (Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 159).

siastical attack.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, he essentially stood for religious toleration: the new principle that was to change the face of intellectual life. A few liberal Catholics shared it with him to some extent<sup>2</sup> long before St. Bartholomew's Day; eminent among them being L'Hopital,<sup>3</sup> whose humanity, tolerance, and concern for practical morality and the reform of the Church brought upon him the charge of atheism. He was, however, a believing Catholic.<sup>4</sup> Deprived of power, his edict of tolerance repealed, he saw the long and ferocious struggle of Catholics and Huguenots renewed, and crowned by the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day (1572). Broken-hearted, and haunted by that monstrous memory, he died within six months.

Two years later there was put to death at Paris, by hanging and burning, on the charge of atheism, Geoffroi Vallée, a man of good family in Orléans. Long before, at the age of sixteen, he had written a freethinking treatise entitled *La Béatitude des Chrétiens, ou le fléau de la foy*—a discussion between a Huguenot, a Catholic, a *libertin*, an Anabaptist and an atheist. He had been the associate of Ronsard, who renounced him, and helped, it is said, to bring him to execution.<sup>5</sup> It is not unlikely that a similar fate would have overtaken the famous Protestant scholar and lexicographer, Henri Estienne (1532-1598), had he not died unexpectedly. His false repute of being "the prince of atheists"<sup>6</sup> and the "Pantagruel of Geneva" was probably due in large part to his sufficiently audacious *Apologie pour Herodote*<sup>7</sup> (1566) and to his having translated into Latin (1562) the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus, a work which must have made for freethinking. But he was rather a Protestant than a rationalist. In the former book he had spoken, either sincerely or ironically, of the "detestable book" of Bonaventure Desperiers, calling him a mocker of God; and impeached Rabelais as a modern Lucian, believing neither in God nor immortality;<sup>8</sup> yet his own performance was fully as well fitted as theirs to cause

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Villemain, *Vie de L'Hopital*, in *Études de l'hist. moderne*, 1846, pp. 363-68, 428.

<sup>3</sup> Buckle (3-vol. ed. ii, 10; 1-vol. ed. p. 291) errs in representing L'Hopital as the only statesman of the time who dreamt of toleration. It is to be noted, on the other hand, that the Huguenots themselves protested against any toleration of atheists or Anabaptists; and even the reputed freethinker Gabriel Naudé, writing his *Science des Princes, ou Considérations politiques sur les Coups d'état*, in 1639, defended the massacre on political grounds (Owen, *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, p. 470, note). Bodin implicitly execrated it. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 162.

<sup>4</sup> Villemain, p. 429.

<sup>5</sup> Garasse, *Doctrine Curieuse*, pp. 125-26; *Mémoires de Garasse*, ed. Ch. Nisard, 1860, pp. 77-78; Perrens, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Bibliophile Jacob, *Introd. to Beroalde de Verville*.

<sup>7</sup> Estienne's full title is: *L'Introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles, anciennes avec les modernes: ou, Traité préparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote*.

<sup>8</sup> *Apologie pour Herodote*, ed. 1607, pp. 97, 249 (liv. i, chs. xiv, xviii. *Cymbalum Mundi*, ed. Bibliophile Jacob, pp. xx, 13).



scandal. It is in fact one of the richest repertoires ever formed of scandalous stories against priests, monks, nuns, and popes.<sup>1</sup>

One literary movement towards better things had begun before the crowning infamy of the Massacre appalled men into questioning the creed of intolerance. Castalio, whom we shall see driven from Geneva by Calvin in 1544 for repugning to the doctrine of predestination, published pseudonymously, in 1554, in reply to Calvin's vindication of the slaying of Servetus, a tract, *De Haereticis quomodo cum iis agendum sit variorum Sententiae*, in which he contrived to collect some passage from the Fathers and from modern writers in favour of toleration. To these he prefaced, by way of a letter to the Duke of Wirtemberg, an argument of his own, the starting-point of much subsequent propaganda.<sup>2</sup> Aconzio, another Italian, followed in his steps; and later came Mino Celso of Siena, with his "long and elaborate argument against persecution," *De Haereticis capitali supplicio non afficiendis* (1584).<sup>3</sup> Withal, Castalio died in beggary, ostracized alike by Protestants and Catholics, and befriended only by the Sozzini, whose sect was the first to earn collectively the praise of condemning persecution.<sup>4</sup> But in the next generation there came to reinforce the cause of humanity a more puissant pen than any of these; while at the same time the recoil from religious cruelty was setting many men secretly at utter variance with faith.

In France in particular a generation of insane civil war for religion's sake must have gone far to build up unbelief. Even among many who did not renounce the faith, there went on an open evolution of stoicism, generated through resort to the teaching of Epictetus. The atrocities of Christian civil war and Christian savagery were such that Christian faith could give small sustenance to the more thoughtful and sensitive men who had to face them and carry on the tasks of public life the while. The needed strength was given by the masculine discipline which pagan thought had provided for an age of oppression and decadence, and which had carried so much of healing even for the Christians who saw decadence carried yet further, that in the fifth century the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus had been turned by St. Nilus into a

<sup>1</sup> The index was specially framed to call attention to these items. The entry, "Fables des dieux des payens cousines germaines des legendes des saints," is typical.

<sup>2</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. CASTALION; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 81; Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, ii, 46-49. Hallam finds Castalio's letter to the Duke of Wirtemberg "cautious"; but Lecky quotes some strong expressions from what he describes as the preface of Martin Bellius (Castalio's pseudonym) to Cluten's *De Haereticis persequendis*, ed. 1610. Castalio died in 1563. As to his translations from the Bible, see Bayle's note.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, ii, 83; McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Even Stäbelin (*Johannes Calvin*, ii, 303) condemns Calvin's action and tone towards Castalio, though he makes the significant remark that the latter "treated the Bible pretty much as any other book."

monastic manual, even as Ambrose manipulated the borrowed Stoicism of Cicero.<sup>1</sup> With its devout theism, the book had appealed to those northern scholars who had mastered Greek in the early years of the sixteenth century, when the refugees of Constantinople had set up Platonic studies in Italy. After 1520, Italian Hellenism rapidly decayed;<sup>2</sup> but in the north it never passed away; and from the stronger men of the new learning in Germany the taste for Epictetus passed into France. In 1558 the semi-Protestant legist Coras—later slain in the massacre of St. Bartholomew—published at Toulouse a translation of the apocryphal dialogue of Epictetus and Hadrian; in 1566 the Protestant poet Rivaudeau translated the *Enchiridion*, which thenceforth became a culture force in France.<sup>3</sup>

The influence appears in Montaigne, in whose essays it is pervasive; but more directly and formally in the book of Justus Lipsius, *De Constantia* (1584), and the same scholar's posthumous dialogues entitled *Manducatio ad philosophiam stoicam* and *Physiologia stoicorum* (1604), which influenced all scholarly Europe. Thus far the Stoic ethic had been handled with Christian bias and application; and Guillaume Du Vair, who embodied it in his work *La Sainte Philosophie* (1588), was not known as a heretic; but in his hands it receives no Christian colouring, and might pass for the work of a deist.<sup>4</sup> And its popularity is to be inferred from his further production of a fresh translation of the *Enchiridion* and a *Traité de la philosophie morale des stoïques*. Under Henri IV he rose to high power; and his public credit recommended his doctrine.

Such were the more visible fruits of the late spread of the Renaissance ferment in France while, torn by the frantic passions of her pious Catholics, she passed from the plane of the Renaissance to that of the new Europe, in which the intellectual centre of gravity was to be shifted from the south to the north, albeit Italy was still to lead the way, in Galileo, for the science of the modern world.

### § 3. The English Evolution

In England as in France the intellectual life undergoes visible retrogression in the fifteenth century, while in Italy, with the

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, Hibbert Lectures, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Fortunat Strowski, *Histoire du sentiment religieux en France au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Ptie I, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, 1907, pp. 19-23.

<sup>4</sup> "Du Vair ne songe pas au Médiateur; s'il y a dans son traité des allusions à Notre Seigneur, le nom de Jésus-Christ ne s'y trouve, je crois bien, pas une fois. Il songe encore moins aux pieux adjuvants qui excitent l'imagination; pas un mot de l'invocation des saints, pas un mot des sacrements" (Strowski, as cited, p. 78).



political problem rapidly developing towards catastrophe, it flourished almost riotously. From the age of Chaucer, considered on its intellectual side and as represented mainly by him, there is a steep fall to almost the time of Sir Thomas More, around whom we see as it were the sudden inrush of the Renaissance upon England. The conquest of France by Henry V and the Wars of the Roses, between them, brought England to the nadir of mental and moral life. But in the long and ruinous storm the Middle Ages, of which Wiclif is the last powerful representative, were left behind, and a new age begins to be prepared.

Of a very different type from Wiclif is the remarkable personality of the Welshman REGINALD (or REYNOLD) PECOCK (1395?-1460?), who seems divided from Wiclif by a whole era of intellectual development, though born within about ten years of his death. It is a singular fact that one of the most rationalistic minds among the serious writers of the fifteenth century should be an English bishop,<sup>1</sup> and an Ultramontane at that. Pecock was an opponent at once of popular Bibliolatry and of priestly persecution, declaring that "the clergy would be condemned at the last day if they did not draw men into consent to the true faith otherwise than by fire and sword and hanging."<sup>2</sup> It was as the rational and temperate defender of the Church against the attacks of the Lollards in general that he formulated the principle of natural reason as against scripturalism. This attitude it is that makes his treatise, the *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, the most modern of theoretic books before More and Hooker and Bacon. That he was led to this measure of rationalism rather by the exigencies of his papalism than by a spontaneous skepticism is suggested by the fact that he stands for the acceptance of miraculous images, shrines, and relics, when the Lollards are attacking them.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is hard to be certain that his belief in the shrines was genuine, so ill does it consist with his attitude to Bibliolatry. In a series of serenely argued points he urges his thesis that the Bible is not the basis of the moral law, but merely an illustration thereof, and that the natural reason is obviously presupposed in the bulk of its teaching. He starts from the formulas of Thomas Aquinas, but reaches a higher ground. It is the position of Hooker, anticipated by a hundred years; and this in an age of such intellectual backwardness and

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Prof. Thorold Rogers, *Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> In 1387 the Lollards were denounced under that name by the Bishop of Worcester as "eternally damned sons of Antichrist."

<sup>3</sup> See the *Repressor*, Babington's ed. in the Rolls Series, 1860, Part II.

literary decadence that the earlier man must be pronounced by far the more remarkable figure. In such a case the full influence of the Renaissance seems to be at work; though in the obscurity of the records we can do no more than conjecture that the new contacts with French culture between the invasion of France by Henry V in 1415 and the expulsion of the English in 1451 may have introduced forces of thought unknown or little known before. If indeed there were English opponents of scripture in Wiclif's day, the idea must have ripened somewhat in Pecock's. Whether, however, the victories of Jeanne D'Arc made some unbelievers as well as many dastards among the English is a problem that does not seem to have been investigated.

Pecock's reply to the Lollards creates the curious situation of a churchman rebutting heretics by being more profoundly heretical than they. In his system, the Scriptures "reveal" only supernatural truths not otherwise attainable, a way of safeguarding dogma not likely to reassure believers. There is reason, indeed, to suspect that Pecock held no dogma with much zeal; and when in his well-named treatise (now lost), *The Provoker*, he denied the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed, "he alienated every section of theological opinion in England."

See Miss A. M. Cooke's art. REGINALD PECOCK in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* This valuable notice is the best short account of Pecock; though the nature of his case is most fully made out by Hook, as cited below. It is characteristic of the restricted fashion in which history is still treated that neither in the *Student's History* of Professor Gardiner nor in the *Short History* of Green is Pecock mentioned. Earlier ideas concerning him were far astray. The notion of Foxe, the martyrologist, that Pecock was an early Protestant, is a gross error. He held not a single Protestant tenet, being a rationalizing papist. A German ecclesiastical historian of the eighteenth century (Werner, *Kirchengeschichte des 18ten Jahrhunderts*, 1756, cited by Lechler) calls Pecock the first English deist. See a general view of his opinions in Lewis's *Life of Dr. Reynold Pecock* (rep. 1820), ch. v. The heresies charged on him are given on p. 160; also in the R. T. S. *Writings and Examinations*, 1831, pp. 200-201. While rejecting Bibliolatry, he yet argued that Popes and Councils could make no change in the current creed; and he thus offended the High Churchmen. Cp. Massingberd, *The English Reformation*, 4th ed. pp. 206-209.

The main causes of the hostility he met from the English hierarchy and Government appear to have been, on the one hand,



his change of political party, which put him in opposition to Archbishop Bourchier, and on the other his zealous championship of the authority of the papacy as against that of the Councils of the Church. It was expressly on the score of his denunciation of the Councils that he was tried and condemned.<sup>1</sup> Thus the reward of his effort to reason down the menacing Lollards and rebut Wiclif<sup>2</sup> was his formal disgrace and virtual imprisonment. Had he not recanted, he would have been burned: as it was, his books were; and it is on record that they consisted of eleven quartos and three folios of manuscript. Either because of his papalism or as a result of official intrigue, Church and lords and commons were of one mind against him; and the mob would fain have burned him with his books.<sup>3</sup> In that age of brutal strife, when "neither the Church nor the opponents of the Church had any longer a sway over men's hearts,"<sup>4</sup> he figures beside the mindless prelates and their lay peers somewhat as does More later beside Henry VIII, as Reason *versus* the Beast; and it was illustrative of his entire lack of fanaticism that he made the demanded retractations—avowing his sin in "trusting to natural reason" rather than to Scripture and the authority of the Church—and went his way in silence to solitude and death. The ruling powers disposed of Lollardism in their own way; and in the Wars of the Roses every species of heretical thought seems to disappear. The bribe held out to the nation by the invasion of France had been fatally effectual to corrupt the spirit of moral criticism which inspired the Lollard movement at its best; and the subsequent period of rapine and strife reduced thought and culture to the levels of the Middle Ages.

A hint of what was possible in the direction of freethought in the England of Henry V and Henry VI emerges in some of the records concerning Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, the youngest son of Henry IV. Gifted but ill-balanced, Humphrey was the chief patron of learning in England in his day; and he drank deeply of the spirit of Renaissance scholarship.<sup>5</sup> Sir Thomas More preserves the story—reproduced also in the old play, *The First Part of the Contention of the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*—of how he exposed the fraud of a begging impostor who pretended to have recovered his sight through the virtue of a saint's relics; and

<sup>1</sup> Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops* (Life of Bourchier), 1867, v, 294-306.

<sup>2</sup> He repels, e.g., Wiclif's argument that a priest's misconduct sufficed to destroy his right to his endowments. *Repressor*, Babington's ed. as cited, ii, 413.

<sup>3</sup> Hook, as cited, v, 309.

<sup>4</sup> Gardiner, *Student's History*, p. 330. Cp. Green, ch. vi, § 1, 2, pp. 267, 275; Stubbs *Const. Hist.* iii, 631-33.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Pauli, *Pictures of Old England*, Eng. tr. Routledge's rep. pp. 332-36.

a modern pietistic historian decides that the Duke "had long ceased to believe in miracles and relics."<sup>1</sup> But if this be true, it is the whole truth as to Humphrey's freethinking. It was the highest flight of rationalism permissible in his day and sphere.

On the view that Humphrey was a freethinker, the pious Pauli, who says (as cited, p. 337) of the Renaissance of letters, "The weak and evil side of this revived form of literature is that its disciples should have elevated the morality, or rather the immorality, of classical antiquity above Christian discipline and virtue," sees fit further to pronounce that the bad account of Gloucester's condition of body drawn up eleven years before his death by the physician Kymer is a proof of the "wild unbridled passions by which the duke was swayed," and throws a lurid light upon "the tendencies and disposition of his mind." Humphrey lived till 55, and died suddenly, under circumstances highly suggestive of poisoning by his enemies. His brothers Henry and John died much younger than he; but in their case the religious historian sees no ground for imputation. But the historian's inference is overstrained. In reality Humphrey never indicated any lack of theological faith. The poet Lydgate, no unbeliever, described him as "Chose of God to be his owne knyghte," and so rigorous "that heretike dar not comen in his sihte" (verses transcribed in Furnivall's *Early English Meals and Manners*, 1868, pp. lxxxv-vi).

His most comprehensive biographer decides that he was "essentially orthodox," despite his uncanonical marriage with his second wife and his general reputation for sexual laxity. "He was punctilious in the performance of his religious duties" and "a stern opponent of the Lollards"; he "countenanced the extinction of heresy by being present at the burning at Smithfield of an old priest who denied the validity of the sacraments of the Church"; and an Archbishop of Milan pronounced him to be "known everywhere as the chiefest friend and preserver of Holy Church" (K. H. Vickers, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Biography*, 1907, pp. 223, 321-23). Of such a personage no exegesis can make a rationalist.

Of other traces of critical thinking in England in that age there is little to be said, so little literature is there to convey them. But there are signs of the influence of the "pagan" thought of the Renaissance in religious books. The old *Revelation of the Monk of Evesham*, ostensibly dating from 1196, was first printed about 1482,<sup>2</sup> with a "prologue" explaining that it "was not shewed to hym only for hym butte also for the confort and profetyng of all cristyn

<sup>1</sup> Pauli, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> See Arber's reprint.



pepulle that none man shuld dowte or mystruste of anothir life and world"; "and as for the trowthe of this reuelacyon no man nother woman ought to dowte in any wise," seeing it is thus miraculously provided that "alle resons and mocyons of infydelite the which risith often tymes of man's sensualite shall utwardly be excluded and quenched." Evidently the old problem of immortality had been agitated.

#### § 4. *The Remaining European Countries*

Not till late in the fifteenth century is the intellectual side of the Renaissance influence to be seen bearing fruit in Germany, of which the turbulent and semi-barbaric life in the medieval period was little favourable to mental progress. Of political hostility to the Church there was indeed an abundance, long before Luther;<sup>1</sup> but amid the many traces of "irreligion" there is practically none of rational freethinking. What reasoned thought there was, as we have seen, turned to Christian mysticism of a pantheistic cast, as in the teaching of Tauler and Eckhart.<sup>2</sup>

Another and a deeper current of thought is seen in the remarkable philosophic work of Bishop Nicolaus of Kues or Cusa (1401-1464), who, professedly by an independent movement of reflection, but really as a result of study of Greek philosophy, reached a larger pantheism than had been formulated by any Churchman since the time of John the Scot.<sup>3</sup> There is little or no trace, however, of any influence attained by his teaching, which indeed could appeal only to a very few minds of that day. Less remarkable than the metaphysic of Nicolaus, though also noteworthy in its way, is his *Dialogue "On Peace, or Concordance of Faith,"* in which, somewhat in the spirit of Boccaccio's tale of the Three Rings, he aims at a reconciliation of all religions, albeit by way of proving the Christian creed to be the true one.

In the Netherlands and other parts of western Europe the popular anti-ecclesiastical heresy of the thirteenth century spread in various degrees; but there is only exceptional trace of literate or properly rationalistic freethinking. Among the most notable developments was the movement in Holland early in the fourteenth century, which compares closely with that of the higher Paulicians and mystics of the two previous centuries, its chief traits being

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Souchay, *Gesch. des deutschen Monarchie*, 1861-62, iii, 230-31.

<sup>2</sup> On this cp. Souchay, pp. 234-39.

<sup>3</sup> See a good synopsis in Pünjer's *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. tr. pp. 68-89; and another in Moritz Carriere's *Die philosophische Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1847, pp. 16-25, which, however, is open to Pünjer's criticism that it is coloured by modern Hegelianism.

a general pantheism, a denial of the efficacy of the sacrament of the altar, an insistence that all men are sons of God, and a general declaration for "natural light."<sup>1</sup> But this did not progressively develop. Lack of leisured culture in the Low Countries, and the terrorism of the Inquisition, would sufficiently account for the absence of avowed unbelief, though everywhere, probably, some was set up by the contact of travellers with the culture of Italy. It is fairly to be inferred that in a number of cases the murderous crusade against witchcraft which was carried on in the fifteenth century served as a means of suppressing heresy, rationalistic or other. At Arras, for instance, in 1460, the execution of a number of leading citizens on a charge of sorcery seems to have been a blow at free discussion in the "chambers of rhetoric."<sup>2</sup> And that rationalism, despite such frightful catastrophes, obscurely persisted, is to be gathered from the long vogue of the work of the Spanish physician Raymund of Sebonde,<sup>3</sup> who, having taught philosophy at Toulouse, undertook (about 1435) to establish Christianity on a rational foundation<sup>4</sup> in his *Theologia Naturalis*, made famous later by Montaigne.

To what length the suppressed rationalism of the age could on occasion go is dramatically revealed in the case of HERMANN VAN RYSWYCK, a Dutch priest, burned for heresy at the Hague in 1512. He was not only a priest in holy orders, but one of the order of Inquisitors; and he put forth the most impassioned denial and defiance of the Christian creed of which there is any record down to modern times. Tried before the inquisitors in 1502, he declared "with his own mouth and with sane mind" that the world is eternal, and was not created as was alleged by "the fool Moses" that there is no hell, and no future life; that Christ, whose whole career was flatly contrary to human welfare and reason, was not the son of Omnipotent God, but a fool, a dreamer, and a seducer of ignorant men, of whom untold numbers had been slain on account of him and his absurd evangel; that Moses had not physically received the law from God; and that "our" faith was shown to be fabulous by its fatuous Scripture, fictitious Bible, and crazy Gospel. And to this exasperated testimony he added: "I was born a Christian, but am no longer one: they are the chief fools." Sentenced in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Paul Frédéricq, *Geschiedenis der Inquisitie in de Nederlanden, 1025-1520*, Gent, 1892-1897, ii, 4-9.

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii-éd. 1857, pp. 125, 172.

<sup>3</sup> This name has many forms; and it is contended that Sabieude is the correct one. See Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, 1881, ii, 423.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hallam, *Introd. to Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, i, 142-44, and the analysis in Prof. Dowden's *Montaigne*, 1905, p. 127 sq.



1502 to perpetual imprisonment, he was again brought forward ten years later, and, being found unbroken by that long durance, was as an unrepentant heretic sentenced to be burned on December 14, 1512, the doom being carried out on the same day. The source of his conviction can be gathered from his declaration that "the most learned Aristotle and his commentator Averroës were nearest the truth"; but his wild sincerity and unyielding courage were all his own. "Nimis infelix quidam" is the estimate of an inquisitor of that day.<sup>1</sup> Not so, unless they are most unhappy who die in battle, fighting for the truth they prize. But it has always been the Christian way to condemn all save Christian martyrs.

There is a tolerably full account of Ryswyck's case in a nearly contemporary document, which evidently copies the official record. Ryswyck is described as "sacré theologie professorem ordinis predicatorum et inquisitorum"; and his declaration runs: "Quod mundum fuit ab eterna et non incipit per creationem fabricatum a stulto Mose, ut dicit Biblia indistincta.....Nec est infernus, ut nostri estimant. Item post hanc vitam nulla erit vita particularis.....Item doctissimus Aristoteles et ejus commentator Auerrois fuerunt veritati propinquissimi. Item Christum fuit stultus et simplex fantasticus et seductor simplicium hominum.....Quot enim homines interfecti sunt propter ipsum et suum Euangelium fatuum! Item quod omnia que Christus gessit, humano generi et rationi recte sunt contraria. Item Christum filium Dei omnipotentem aperte nego. Et Mosen legem a Deo visibiliter et facialiter suscepisse recuso. Item fides nostra fabulosa est, ut probat nostra fatua Scriptura et ficta Biblia et Euangelium delirum.....Omnes istos articulos et consimilos confessus est proprio ore et sana mente coram inquisitore et notario et testibus, addens: Ego Christianus natus, sed iam non sum Christianus, quoniam illi stultissimi sunt." Paul Frédéricq, *Corpus documentorum Inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, Gent, 1889, i, 494, 501-502.

Thus the Renaissance passed on to the age of the Reformation the seeds of a rationalism which struck far deeper than the doctrine of Luther, but at the same time left a social soil in which such seeds could ill grow. Its own defeat, social and intellectual, may be best realized in terms of its failure to reach either political or physical science. Lack of the former meant political retrogression and bondage; and lack of the latter a renewed dominion of superstition and Bibliolatry—two sets of conditions of which each facilitated the other.

<sup>1</sup> Van Hoogstraten, in Frédéricq, as cited below.

Nothing is more significant of the intellectual climate of the Renaissance than the persistence at all its stages of the belief in astrology, of which we find some dregs even in Bacon. That pseudo-science indeed stands, after all, for the spirit of science, and is not to be diagnosed as mere superstition; being really an *a priori* fallacy fallen into in the deliberate search for some principle of coördination in human affairs. Though adhered to by many prominent Catholics, including Charles V, and by many Protestants, including Melancthon, it is logically anti-Christian, inasmuch as it presupposes in the moral world a reign of natural law, independent of the will or caprice of any personal power. Herein it differs deeply from magic;<sup>1</sup> though in the Renaissance the return to the lore of antiquity often involved an indiscriminate acceptance and blending of both sorts of occult pagan lore.<sup>2</sup> Magic subordinates Nature to Will: astrology, as apart from angelology, subordinates Will to Cosmic Law. For many perplexed and thoughtful men, accordingly, it was a substitute, more or less satisfying, for the theory, grown to them untenable, of a moral government of the universe. It was in fact a primary form of sociology proper, as it had been the primary form of astronomy; to which latter science, even in the Renaissance, it was still for many the introduction.

It flourished, above all things, on the insecurity inseparable from the turbulent Italian life of the Renaissance, even as it had flourished on the appalling vicissitude of the drama of imperial Rome; and it is conceivable that the inclination to true science which is seen in such men as Galileo, after the period of Italian independence, was nourished by the greater stability attained for a time under absolutist rule. And though Protestantism, on the other hand, adhered in the main unreasoningly to the theory of a moral control, that dogma at least served to countervail the dominion of astrology, which was only a dogmatism with a difference, and as such inevitably hindered true science.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, Protestantism tended to make more effectual that veto on pagan occultism which had been ineffectually passed from time to time by the Catholic Church; albeit the motive was stress of Christian superstition, and the veto was aimed almost as readily at

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Frazer's assumption (*Golden Bough*, 3rd ed. pt. i, i, 224) that magic assumes an invariable order of nature, is unsubstantiated even by his vast anthropological erudition. Magic varies arbitrarily, and the idea of a fixed "order" does not belong to the magician's plane of thought.

<sup>2</sup> Maury, *La Magie et l'Astrologie*, 4e éd. pp. 214-16.

<sup>3</sup> "Judicial astrology.....which supplanted and degraded the art of medicine" (Prof. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, App. p. 113). There is a startling survival of it in the physiology of Harvey. *Id.* p. 45.



inductive and true science as at the deductive and false. We shall find the craze of witchcraft, in turn, dominating Protestant countries at a time when freethinkers and liberal Catholics elsewhere were setting it at naught.

There can be little doubt that, broadly speaking, the new interest in Scripture study and ecclesiastical history told against the free play of thought on scientific and scholarly problems; we shall find Bacon realizing the fact a hundred years after Luther's start; and the influence has operated down to our own day. In this resistance Catholics played their part. The famous Cornelius Agrippa<sup>1</sup> (1486-1535) never ceased to profess himself a Catholic, and had small sympathy with the Reformers, though always at odds with the monks; and his long popular treatise *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium, atque excellentia verbi Dei declamatio* (1531) is a mere polemic for scripturalism against alike false science and true, monkish superstition and reason. Vilified as a magician by the monks, and as an atheist and a scoffer by angry humanists,<sup>2</sup> he did but set error against error, being himself a believer in witchcraft, a hater of anatomy, and as confident in his contempt of astronomy as of astrology. And his was a common frame of mind for centuries.

Still, the new order contained certain elements of help for a new life, as against its own inclement principles of authority and dogma; and the political heterogeneity of Europe, seconded by economic pressures and by new geographic discovery, sufficed further to prevent any far-reaching organization of tyranny. Under these conditions, new knowledge could incubate new criticism. But it would be an error-breeding oversight to forget that in the many-coloured world before the Reformation there was not only a certain artistic and imaginative sunlight which the Reformation long darkened, but even, athwart the mortal rigours of papal rule, a certain fitful play of intellectual insight to which the peoples of the Reformation became for a time estranged.

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 385.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE REFORMATION, POLITICALLY CONSIDERED

#### § 1. *The German Conditions*

IN a vague and general sense the ecclesiastical revolution known as the Reformation was a phenomenon of freethought. To be so understood, indeed, it must be regarded in contrast to the dominion of the Catholic Church, not to the movement which we call the Renaissance. That movement it was that made the Reformation possible; and if we have regard to the reign of Bibliolatry which Protestantism set up, we seem to be contemplating rather a superimposing of Semitic darkness upon Hellenic light than an intellectual emancipation. Emancipation of another kind the Reformation doubtless brought about. In particular it involved, to an extent not generally realized, a secularization of life, through the sheer curtailment, in most Protestant countries, of the personnel and apparatus of clericalism, and the new disrepute into which, for a time, these fell. Alike in Germany and in England there was a breaking-up of habits of reverence and of self-prostration before creed and dogma and ritual. But this liberation was rather social than intellectual, and the product was rather licence and irreverence than ordered freethought. On the other hand, when the first unsettlement was over, the new growth of Bibliolatry tended rather to deepen the religious way of feeling and make more definite the religious attitude. Tolerance did not emerge until after a whole era of embittered strife. The Reformation, in fact, was much more akin to a revolt against a hereditary king than to the process of self-examination and logical scrutiny by which men pass from belief to disbelief in a theory of things, a dogma, or a document.

The beginning of such a process had indeed taken place in Germany before Luther, insofar as the New Learning represented by such humanists as Erasmus, such scholars as Reuchlin,<sup>1</sup> and such satirists as Ulrich von Hutten, set up a current of educated hostility to the ignorance and the grosser superstitions of the

<sup>1</sup> Who, however, was no rationalist, but an orientalizing mystic. Cp. Carriere, *Die philos. Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1846, pp. 36-38.



churchmen. For Germany, as for England, this movement was a contagion from the new scholarship and Platonism of Italy;<sup>1</sup> and the better minds in the four universities founded in the pre-Lutheran generation (Tübingen, 1477; Mayence, 1482; Frankfort-on-the-Oder, 1506; Wittenberg, 1502) necessarily owed much to Italian impulses, which they carried on, though the universities as a whole were bitterly hostile to the new learning.<sup>2</sup> The Dutch freethinker Ryswyck, as we saw, was fundamentally an Averroist; and Italy was the stronghold of Averroism, of which the monistic bias probably fostered the Unitarianism of the sixteenth century. But it was not this literary and scholarly movement that effected the Reformation so-called, which was rather an economic and political than a mental revolution.

The persistence of Protestant writers in discussing the early history of the Reformation without a glance at the economic causation is one of the great hindrances to historic science. From such popular works as those of D'Aubigné and Häusser it is practically impossible to learn what socially took place in Germany; and the general Protestant reader can learn it only—and imperfectly—from the works on the Catholic side, as Audin's *Histoire de la vie de Luther* (Eng. tr. 1853) and Döllinger's *Die Reformation*, and the more scientific Protestant studies, such as those of Ranke and Bezold (even there not at any great length), to neither of which classes of history will he resort. In England the facts are partially realized, in the light of an ecclesiastical predilection, through High Church histories such as that of Blunt, which proceed upon a Catholic leaning. Cobbett's intemperate exposure of the economic causation has found an audience chiefly among Catholics.

Bezold admits that "with perfect justice have recent historians commented on the former underrating of an economic force which certainly played its part in the spread and establishment of the Reformation" (*Gesch. der deutschen Reformation*, 1890, p. 563). The broad fact is that in not a single country could the Reformation have been accomplished without enlisting the powerful classes or corporations, or alternatively the *de facto* governments, by proffering the plunder of the Church. Only in a few Swiss cantons, and in Holland, does the confiscation seem to have been made to the common good (cp. the present writer's *Evolution of States*, pp. 311, 343).

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Ref. in Germany*, bk. ii, ch. i (Eng. tr. Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, p. 129). The point is fairly put by Audin in the introduction to his *Histoire de Luther*. Compare Green: "The awakening of a rational Christianity, whether in England or in the Teutonic world at large, begins with the Florentine studies of Sir John Colet" (*Short Hist.*, ch. vi, § iv). Colet, however, was strictly orthodox. Ulrich von Hutten spent five of the formative years of his life in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, p. 205.

But even in Holland needy nobles had finally turned Protestant in the hope of getting Church lands. (See Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 131.) Elsewhere appropriation of Church lands by princes and nobles was the general rule.

Even as to Germany, it is impossible to accept Michelet's indulgent statement that most of the confiscated Church property "returned to its true destination, to the schools, the hospitals, the communes; to its true proprietors, the aged, the child, the toiling family" (*Hist. de France*, x, 333; see the same assertion in Henderson, *Short History of Germany*, 1902, i, 344). Plans to that effect were drawn up; but, as the princes were left to carry out the arrangement, they took the lion's share. Ranke (*Hist. of the Ref.* bk. iv, ch. v; Eng. tr. 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 466-67) admits much grabbing of Church lands as early as 1526; merely contending, with Luther, that papist nobles had begun the spoliation. (Cp. Bezold, pp. 564-65; Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, cap. 393.) In Saxony, when monks broke away from their monasteries, the nobles at once appropriated the lands and buildings (Ranke, p. 467). Luther made a warm appeal to the Elector against the nobles in general (Ranke, p. 467; Luther's letter, Nov. 22, 1526, in *Werke*, ed. De Wette, iii, 137; letter to Spalatin, Jan. 1, 1527, *id.* p. 147; also p. 153). See too his indignant protests against the rapine of the princes and nobles and the starvation of the ministers in the *Table Talk*, chs. 22, 60. Even Philip of Hesse did not adhere to his early and disinterested plans of appropriation (Ranke, pp. 468-69, 711-12). All that Ranke can claim is that "some great institutions were really founded"—to wit, two homes for "young ladies of noble birth," four hospitals, and the theological school of Marburg. And this was in the most hopeful region.

There is positive evidence, further, that not only ecclesiastical but purely charitable foundations were plundered by the Protestants (Witzel, cited by Döllinger, *Die Reformation, ihre innere Entwicklung und ihre Wirkungen*, 1846, i, 46, 47, 51, 62); and, as school foundations were confiscated equally with ecclesiastical in England, there is no reason to doubt the statement. Practically the same process took place in Scotland, where the share of Church property proposed to be allotted to the Protestant ministers was never given, and their protests were treated with contempt (Burton, *History of Scotland*, iv, 37-41). Knox's comments were similar to Luther's (*Works*, Laing's ed. ii, 310-12).

Dr. Gardiner, a fairly impartial historian, sums up that, after the German settlement of 1552, "The princes claimed the right of continuing to secularize Church lands within their territories as inseparable from their general right of providing



for the religion of their subjects.....About a hundred monasteries are said to have fallen victims in the Palatinate alone; and an almost equal number, the gleanings of a richer harvest which had been reaped before the Convention of Passau, were taken possession of in Northern Germany" (*The Thirty Years' War*, 8th ed. p. 11).

The credit of bringing the various forces to a head, doubtless, remains with Luther, though ground was further prepared by literary predecessors such as John of Wesel and John Wessel, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Ulrich von Hutten. But even the signal courage of Luther could not have availed to fire an effectual train of action unless a certain number of nobles had been ready to support him for economic reasons. Even the shameless sale of indulgences by Tetzel was resented most keenly on the score that it was draining Germany of money;<sup>1</sup> and nothing is more certain than that Luther began his battle not as a heretic but as an orthodox Catholic Reformer, desiring to propitiate and not to defy the papacy. Economic forces were the determinants. This becomes the more clear when we note that the Reformation was only the culmination or explosion of certain intellectual, social, and political forces seen at work throughout Christendom for centuries before. In point of mere doctrine, the Protestants of the sixteenth century had been preceded and even distanced by heretics of the eleventh, and by teachers of the ninth. The absurdity of relic-worship, the folly of pilgrimages and fastings, the falsehood of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the heresy of prayers to the saints, the unsripturalness of the hierarchy—these and a dozen other points of protest had been raised by Paulicians, by Paterini, by Beghards, by Apostolicals, by Lollards, long before the time of Luther. As regards his nearer predecessors, indeed, this is now a matter of accepted Protestant history.<sup>2</sup> What is not properly realized is that the conditions which wrought political success where before there had been political failure were special political conditions; and that to these, and not to supposed differences in national character, is due the geographical course of the Reformation.

<sup>1</sup> As to the general resentment of the money drain cp. Strauss, *Gespräche von Ulrich von Hutten*, 1860, Vorrede, p. xiv, and the dialogues, pp. 159, 363. Cp. Ranke, bk. ii, ch. i (Eng. tr. as cited, pp. 123-26).

<sup>2</sup> See Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, passim. Even the Peasants' Rising was adumbrated in the movement of Hans Böheim of Nikleshausen (fl. 1476), whose doctrine was both democratic and anti-clerical. (Work cited, ii, 390-81; cp. Bezold, *Gesch. der deutschen Reform*, 1890, ch. vii.)

## § 2. *The Problem in Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands*

We have seen that the spirit of reform was strong in Italy three hundred years before Luther; and that some of the strongest movements within the Church were strictly reformatory, and originally disinterested in a high degree. In less religious forms the same spirit abounded throughout the Renaissance; and at the end of the fifteenth century Savonarola was preaching reform religiously enough at Florence. His death, however, was substantially due to the perception that ecclesiastical reform, as conducted by him, was a socio-political process,<sup>1</sup> whence the reformer was a socio-political disturber. Intellectually he was no innovator; on the contrary, he was a hater of literary enlightenment, and he was as ready to burn astrologers as were his enemies to burn him.<sup>2</sup> His claim, in his *Triumph of the Cross*, to combat unbelievers by means of sheer natural reason, indicates only his inability to realize any rationalist position—a failure to be expected in his age, when rationalism was denied argumentative utterance, and when the problems of Christian evidences were only being broached. The very form of the book is declamatory rather than ratiocinative, and every question raised is begged.<sup>3</sup> That he failed in his crusade of Church reform, and that Luther succeeded in his, was due to no difference between Italian and German character, but to the vast difference in the political potentialities of the two cases. The fall of public liberty in Florence, which must have been preceded as it was accompanied by a relative decline in popular culture,<sup>4</sup> and which led to the failure of Savonarola, may be in a sense attributed to Italian character; but that character was itself the product of peculiar social and political conditions, and was not inferior to that of any northern population.<sup>5</sup>

The Savonarolan movement had all the main features of the Puritanism of the northern "Reform." Savonarola sent organized bodies of boys, latterly accompanied by bodies of adults, to force their way into private houses and confiscate things thought suitable for the reformatory bonfire. Burckhardt, p. 477; Perrens, *Jérôme Savonarole*, 2e édit. pp. 140-41. The things burned included pictures and busts of inestimable artistic value, and manuscripts of exquisite beauty. Perrens, p. 229. Compare Villari, as cited; George Eliot's *Romola*, bk. iii,

<sup>1</sup> See Guicciardini's analysis of the parties, cited by E. Armstrong in the "Cambridge Modern History," vol. i, *The Renaissance*, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. pp. 476-77.

<sup>3</sup> See the sympathetic analysis of the book by Villari, *Life of Savonarola*, Eng. tr. pp. 582-94, where it is much overrated.

<sup>4</sup> As to the education of the Florentine common people in the fourteenth century cp. Burckhardt, pp. 203-204; Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Armstrong, as cited, pp. 150-51.



ch. xlix; and Merejkowski's *The Forerunner* (Eng. tr.), bk. vii. Previous reformers had set up "bonfires of false hair and books against the faith" (Armstrong, as cited, p. 167); and Savonarola's bands of urchins were developments from previous organizations, bent chiefly on blackmail. (*Id.*) But he carried the tyranny furthest, and actually proposed to put obstinate gamblers to the torture. Perrens, p. 132. Villari in his sentimental commemoration lecture on Savonarola (*Studies Historical and Critical*, Eng. tr. 1907) ignores these facts.

When, a generation later, the propaganda of the Lutheran movement reached Italy, it was more eagerly welcomed than in any of the Teutonic countries outside of the first Lutheran circle, though a vigilant system was at once set on foot for the destruction of the imported books.<sup>1</sup> It had made much headway at Milan and Florence in 1525;<sup>2</sup> and we have the testimony of Pope Clement VII himself that before 1530 the Lutheran heresy was widely spread not only among the laity but among priests and friars, both mendicant and non-mendicant, many of whom propagated it by their sermons.<sup>3</sup> The ruffianism and buffoonery of the German Lutheran soldiers in the army of Charles V at the sack of Rome in 1529 was hardly likely to win adherents to their sect;<sup>4</sup> yet the number increased all over Italy. In 1541-45 they were numerous and audacious at Bologna,<sup>5</sup> where in 1537 a commission of cardinals and prelates, appointed by Pope Paul III, had reported strongly on the need for reformation in the Church. In 1542 they were so strong at Venice as to contemplate holding public assemblies; in the neighbouring towns of Vicentino, Vicenza, and Trevisano they seem to have been still more numerous;<sup>6</sup> and Cardinal Caraffa reported to the Pope that all Italy was infected with the heresy.<sup>7</sup>

Now began the check. Among the Protestants themselves there had gone on the inevitable strifes over the questions of the Trinity and the Eucharist; the more rational views of Zwingli and Servetus were in notable favour;<sup>8</sup> and the Catholic reaction,

<sup>1</sup> McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, pp. 28-30, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 54, 68.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 45, citing Reynald's *Annales*, ad. ann. 1530; Trechsel, *Leio Sozzini und die Anti-trinitarier seiner Zeit*, 1844, pp. 19-35.

<sup>4</sup> McCrie reasons otherwise, from the fact that the sack of Rome was by many Catholics regarded as a divine judgment on the papacy; but he omits to mention the pestilence which followed and destroyed the bulk of the conquering army (Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Cap. 390).

<sup>5</sup> McCrie, pp. 59-60.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 66.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 112, 115.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* pp. 89, 98, 215. McCrie thinks it useful to suggest (p. 95) that anti-trinitarianism seems to have begun at Siena, "whose inhabitants were proverbial among their countrymen for levity and inconstancy of mind"—citing Dante, *Inferno*, canto xxix, 121-23. Thus does theology illumine sociology. In a note on the same page the historian cites the testimony of Melancthon (*Epist.* coll. 852, 941) as to the commonness of "Platonic and skeptical theories" among his Italian correspondents in general; and quotes further the words of Calvin, who for once rises above invective to explain as to heresy (*Opera*, viii, 510) that "In Italia, propter rarum acumen, magis eminet." The historian omits, further, to trace German Unitarianism to the levity of a particular community in Germany.

fanned by Caraffa, was the more facile. Measures were first taken against heretical priests and monks; Ochino and Peter Martyr had to fly; and many monks in the monastery of the latter were imprisoned. At Rome was founded, in 1543, the Congregation of the Holy Office, a new Inquisition, on the deadly model of that of Spain; and thenceforth the history of Protestantism in Italy is but one of suppression. The hostile force was all-pervading, organized, and usually armed with the whole secular power; and though in Naples the old detestation of the Inquisition broke out anew so strongly that even the Spanish tyranny could not establish it,<sup>1</sup> the papacy elsewhere carried its point by explaining how much more lenient was the Italian than the Spanish Inquisition. Such a pressure, kept up by the strongest economic interest in Italy, no movement could resist; and it would have suppressed the Reformation in any country or any race, as a similar pressure did in Spain.

Prof. Gebhart (*Orig. de la Renais. en Italie*, p. 68) writes that "Italy has known no great national heresies: one sees there no uprising of minds which resembles the profound popular movements provoked by Waldo, Wiclif, John Huss, or Luther." The decisive answer to this is soon given by the author himself (p. 74): "If the Order of Franciscans has had in the peninsula an astonishing popularity; if it has, so to speak, formed a Church within the Church, it is that it responded to the profound aspirations of an entire people." (Cp. p. 77.) Yet again, after telling how the Franciscan heresy of the *Eternal Gospel* so long prevailed, M. Gebhart speaks (p. 78) of the Italians as a people whom "formal heresy has never seduced." These inconsistencies derive from the old fallacy of attributing the course of the Reformation to national character. (See it discussed in the present writer's *Evolution of States*, pp. 237-38, 302-307, 341-44.) Burckhardt, while recognizing—as against the theory of "something lacking in the Italian mind"—that the Italian movements of Church reformation "failed to achieve success only because circumstances were against them," goes on to object that the course of "mighty events like the Reformation.....eludes the deductions of the philosophers," and falls back on "mystery." (*Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. p. 457.) There is really much less "mystery" about such movements than about small ones; and the causes of the Reformation are in large part obvious and

<sup>1</sup> A. von Reumont, *The Carafas of Maddaloni*, Eng. tr. 1854, pp. 33-37; McCrie, p. 122. It was not Protestantism that made the revolt. The contemporary historian Porzio states that the Lutherans were so few that they could easily be counted. Von Reumont, as cited, p. 33. It was not heresy that moved the Neapolitans, but the knowledge that perjurers could be found in Naples to swear to anything, and that the machine would thus be made one of pecuniary extortion.



simple. Baur, even in the act of claiming special credit for the personality of Luther as the great factor in the Reformation, admits that only in the peculiar political conditions in which he found himself could he have succeeded. (*Kirchengeschichte der neueren Zeit*, 1863, p. 23.)

The broad explanation of the Italian failure is that in Italy reform could not for a moment be dreamt of save as *within* the Church, where there was no economic leverage such as effected the Reformation from the outside elsewhere. It was a relatively easy matter in Germany and England to renounce the Pope's control and make the Churches national or autonomous. To attempt that in Italy would have meant creating a state of universal and insoluble strife. (Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. i, ed. 1897, p. 369. Symonds, however, omits to note the *financial* dependence of Italian society on the papal system; and his verdict that *Luther and the nations of the north* saw clearly "what the Italians could not see" is simply the racial fallacy over again.)

Apart from that, the Italians, as we have seen, were as much bent on reformation as any other people in mass; and the earlier Franciscan movement was obviously more disinterested than either the later German or the English, in both of which plunder was the inducement to the leading adherents, as it was also in Switzerland. There the wholesale bestowal of Church livings on Italians was the strongest motive to ecclesiastical revolution; and in Zürich, the first canton which adopted the Reformation, the process was made easy by the State guaranteeing posts and pensions for life to the whole twenty-four canons of the chapter. (Vieusseux, *History of Switzerland*, 1840, pp. 120, 128; cp. Zschokke, *Schweizerland's Geschichte*, 9te Ausg. ch. 32, and Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, 1901, pp. 222-25, 295-96.) The Protestants had further the support of the unbelieving soldiery, made anti-religious in the Italian wars, who rejoiced in the process of priest-baiting and plunder (Vieusseux, p. 130).

The process of suppression in Italy was prolonged through sixty years. In 1543 numbers of Protestants began to fly; hundreds more were cast into prison; and, save in a few places, public profession of the heresy was suppressed. In 1546 the papacy persuaded the Venetian senate to put down the Protestant communities in their dominions, and in 1548 there began in Venice a persecution in which many were sent to the galleys. To reach secret Protestantism, the papacy dispersed spies throughout Italy, Ferrara being particularly attended to, as a known hotbed.<sup>1</sup> After the death

<sup>1</sup> McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 131.

of the comparatively merciful Paul III (1550), Julius III authorized new severities. A Ferrarese preacher was put to death; and the Duchess Renée, the daughter of Louis XII, who had notoriously favoured the heretics, was made virtually a prisoner in her own palace, secluded from her children. At Faenza, a nobleman died under torture at the hands of the inquisitors, and a mob in turn killed some of these;<sup>1</sup> but the main process went on throughout the country. An old Waldensian community in Calabria having reverted to its former opinions under the new stimulus, it was warred upon by the inquisitors, who employed for the purpose outlaws; and multitudes of victims, including sixty women, were put to the torture.<sup>2</sup> At Montalto, in 1560, another Waldensian community were taken captive; eighty-eight men were slaughtered, their throats being cut one by one; many more were tortured; the majority of the men were sent to the Spanish galleys; and the women and children were sold into slavery.<sup>3</sup> In Venice many were put to death by drowning.<sup>4</sup>

Of individual executions there were many. In a documented list of seventy-eight persons burned alive or hanged and burned at Rome from 1553 to 1600,<sup>5</sup> only a minority are known to have been Lutherans, the official records being kept on such varying principles that it is impossible to tell how many of the victims were Catholic criminals;<sup>6</sup> while some heretics are represented—it would seem falsely—as having died in the communion of the Church. But probably more than half were Lutherans or Calvinists. The first in the list (1553) are Giovanni Mollio,<sup>7</sup> a Minorite friar of Montalcino, who had been a professor at Brescia and Bologna, and Giovanni Teodori<sup>8</sup> of Perugia; and the former is stated in the official record to have recommended his soul to God, the Virgin Mary, St. Francis, and St. Anthony of Padua, though he had been condemned as an obstinate Lutheran. The next victims (1556) are the Milanese friar Ambrogio de Cavoli, who dies "firm in his false opinion," and Pomponio Angerio or Algieri of Nola, a student aged twenty-four, who, "as being obstinate, was burned

<sup>1</sup> McCrie, pp. 143-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 158-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 161-63. This seems to have been one of the latest instances of enslavement in Italy. As to the selling of many Capuan women in Rome after the capture of Capua in 1501, see Burckhardt, p. 279, note.

<sup>4</sup> McCrie, pp. 140-43.

<sup>5</sup> Domenico Orano, *Liberi Pensatori bruciati in Roma dal XVI al XVIII Secolo*, Roma, 1904. Giordano Bruno is 77th in the list; and there are only eight more. The 85th case was in 1642; and the last—the burning of a dead body—in 1761.

<sup>6</sup> Orano, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Signor Orano gives the name as Buzio, citing the 1835 Italian translation of McCrie, and pronouncing Cantù (ii, 338) wrong in making it Mollio. But in the 1856 ed. of McCrie's work the name is given (pp. 57-58, 168-69) as John Mollio. Cantù then appears to have been right; but the date he gives, 1533, seems to be a blunder.

<sup>8</sup> McCrie gives this name as Tisserano.



alive."<sup>1</sup> These were the first victims of Caraffa after his elevation to the papal chair as Paul IV. Under Pius IV three were burned in 1560; under Pius V two in 1566, six in 1567, six in 1568, and so on. Francesco Cellario, an ex-Franciscan friar, living as a refugee and Protestant preacher in the Grisons, was kidnapped, taken to Rome, and burned<sup>2</sup> (1569). A Neapolitan nobleman, Pompeo de Monti, caught in Rome, was officially declared to have "renounced head by head all the errors he had held," and accordingly was benignantly beheaded.<sup>3</sup> Quite a number, including the learned protonotary Carnesecchi (1567), are alleged to have died "in the bosom of the Church."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, some of the inquisitors themselves came under the charge of heresy, two cardinals and a bishop being actually prosecuted<sup>5</sup>—whether for Lutheranism or for other forms of private judgment does not appear.

Simple Lutheranism, however, seems to have been the usual limit of heresy among those burned. Aonio Paleario (originally Antonio della Paglia or de' Pagliaricci) of Veroli<sup>6</sup>—poet and professor of rhetoric at Milan, hanged in 1570 (in his seventieth year) either for denouncing the Inquisition or for Lutheranism—was an extreme heretic from the Catholic point of view. His *Actio in Romanos Pontificos et eorum asseclas* is still denounced by the Church.<sup>7</sup> If, however, he was the author of the *Trattato utilissimo del beneficio di Giesu Crocifisso verso I Christiani*, he was simply an evangelical of the school of Luther, exalting faith and making light of works; and its "remedies against the temptation of doubt" deal solely with theological difficulties, not with critical unbelief.<sup>8</sup> This treatise, immensely popular in the sixteenth century, was so zealously destroyed by the Church that when Ranke wrote no copy was known to exist.<sup>9</sup> The *Trattato* was placed on the first papal *Index Expurgatorius* in 1549; and the nearly complete extinction of the book is an important illustration of the Church's faculty of suppressing literature.

The *Index*, anticipated by Charles V in the Netherlands several years earlier, was established especially to resist the Reformation; and its third class contained a prohibition of all anonymous books

<sup>1</sup> Orano, p. 6; McCrie, pp. 169-70.

<sup>2</sup> Orano, pp. 15-16. McCrie, p. 163, says he was strangled; but the official record is "fu mozza la testa."

<sup>3</sup> Orano, p. 22. As to Carnesecchi's career see McCrie, pp. 173-79; and Babington's ed. of Paleario, 1855, Introd. pp. lxx-lxvi.

<sup>4</sup> McCrie, p. 164. See Trechsel, *Letto Sozzini*, p. 35, as to Baldo Lupetino.

<sup>5</sup> As to whom see McCrie, pp. 81-84, 179-82, and the copious *Life and Times of Aonio Paleario*, by M. Young, 2 vols. 1860.

<sup>6</sup> Marini, *Galileo e l'Inquisizione*, Roma, 1850, p. 37, note. <sup>8</sup> Babington's ed. p. 46 sq.

<sup>9</sup> It was afterwards unearthed, however; and Babington's ed. (1855) is an almost facsimile reprint, with old French and English versions.

published since 1519. The destruction of books in Italy in the first twenty years of the work of the Congregation of the Index was enormous, nearly every library being decimated, and many annihilated. All editions of the classics, and even of the Fathers, annotated by Protestants, or by Erasmus, were destroyed; the library of the Medicean College at Florence, despite the appeals of Duke Cosmo, was denuded of many works of past generations, now pronounced heretical; and many dead writers who had passed for good Catholics were put on the *Index*. Booksellers, plundered of their stocks, were fain to seek another calling; and printers, seeing that any one of them who printed a condemned work had every book printed by him put on the *Index*, were driven to refuse all save works officially accredited. It was considered a merciful relaxation of the procedure when, after the death of Paul IV (1555), certain books, such as Erasmus's editions of the Fathers, were allowed to be merely mutilated.<sup>1</sup> The effect of the whole machinery in making Italy in the seventeenth century relatively unlearned and illiterate cannot easily be overstated.

In fine, the Reformation failed in Italy because of the economic and political conditions, as it failed in Spain; as it failed in a large part of Germany; as it would have failed in Holland had Philip II made his capital there (in which case Spain might very well have become Protestant); and as it would have failed in England had Elizabeth been a Catholic, like her sister. During the sixty years from 1520 to 1580, thousands of Italian Protestants left Italy, as thousands of Spanish Protestants fled from Spain, and thousands of English Protestants from England in the reign of Mary.<sup>2</sup> To make the outcome in Italy and Spain a basis for a theory of racial tendency in religion, or racial defect of "public spirit," is to explain history in a fashion which, in physical science, has long been discredited as an argument in a circle.

McCrie, at the old standpoint, says of the Inquisition that "this iniquitous and bloody tribunal could never obtain a footing either in France or in Germany"; that "the attempt to introduce it in the Netherlands was resisted by the adherents of the old as well as the disciples of the new religion; and it kindled a civil war which.....issued in establishing civil and religious liberty"; and that "the ease with which it was introduced into Italy showed that, whatever illumination there was among the Italians.....they were destitute of that public

<sup>1</sup> Cp. McCrie, pp. 114-17.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. McCrie, *Ref. in Italy*, ch. v; *Ref. in Spain*, ch. viii; Green, *Short Hist.* pp. 358, 362.



spirit and energy of principle which were requisite to shake off the degrading yoke by which they were oppressed." The ethical attitude of the Christian historian is noteworthy; but we are here concerned with his historiography. A little reflection will make it clear that the non-establishment of the Inquisition in France and Germany was due precisely to the fact that the papacy was not in these countries as it was in Italy, and that the native Governments resented external influence.

As to the Netherlands, the statement is misleading in the extreme. The Inquisition set up by Charles V was long and fully established in the Low Countries; and Motley recognizes that it was there more severe even than in Spain. It was Charles V who, in 1546, gave orders for the establishment of the Inquisition in Naples, when the people so effectually resisted. The view, finally, that the attempt to suppress heresy caused the Dutch revolt is merely part of the mythology of the Reformation. Charles V, at the outset of his reign, stood to Spain in the relation of a foreign king who, with his Flemish courtiers, exploited Spanish revenues. Only by making Madrid his capital and turning semi-Spanish did he at all reverse that relation between the two parts of his dominions. So late as 1550 he set up an exceptionally merciless form of the Inquisition in the Low Countries, and this without losing any of the loyalty of the middle and upper classes, Protestantism having made its converts only among the poor. In 1546 too he had set up an *Index Expurgatorius* with the assistance of the theological faculty at Louvain; and there was actually a Flemish *Index* in print before the papal one (McCrie, *Ref. in Italy*, p. 184; Ticknor, *Hist. of Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. i, 493).

What set up the breach between the Netherlands and Spain was the failure of Philip II to adjust himself to Dutch interests as his father had adjusted himself to Spanish. The sunderance was on lines of economic interest and racial jealousy; and Dutch Protestantism was not the cause but the effect. In the war, indeed, multitudes of Dutch Catholics held persistently with their Protestant fellow-countrymen against Spain, as many English Catholics fought against the Armada. As late as 1600 the majority of the people of Groningen were still Catholics, as the great majority are now in North Brabant and Limburg; and in 1900 the Catholics in the Netherlands were nearly a third of the whole. From first to last too the Dutch Protestant creed and polity were those set up by Calvin, a Frenchman.

To those accustomed to the conventional view, the case may become clearer on a survey of the course of anti-papalism in other countries than those mentioned. The political determination of the process in

the sixteenth century, indeed, cannot be properly realized save in the light of kindred movements of earlier date, when the "Teutonic conscience" made, not for reform, but for fixation.

### § 3. *The Hussite Failure in Bohemia*

That the causal forces in the Reformation were neither racial religious bias nor special gift on the part of any religious teachers is made tolerably clear by the pre-Lutheran episode of the Hussites in Bohemia a century before the German movement. In Bohemia as elsewhere clerical avarice, worldliness, and misconduct had long kept up anti-clerical feeling; and the adoption of Wiclif's teaching by Huss<sup>1</sup> at the end of the fourteenth century was the result, and not the cause, of Bohemian anti-papalism.<sup>2</sup> The Waldensians, whose doctrines were closely akin to those of Huss, were represented in Bohemia as early as the twelfth century; and so late as 1330 their community was a teaching centre, able to send money help to the Waldensians of Italy. So apparent was the heredity that Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, maintained that the Hussites were a branch of the Waldenses.<sup>3</sup>

Before Huss too a whole series of native reformers, beginning with the Moravian Miltz, Archdeacon of Prague, had set up a partly anti-clerical propaganda. Miltz, who gave up his emoluments (1363) to become a wandering preacher, actually wrote a *Libellus de Anti-christo*, affirming that the Church was already in Anti-christ's power, or nearly so.<sup>4</sup> It was written while he was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome at the instance of the mendicant orders, whom he censured. As, however, the later hostility he incurred, up to his death, was on the score of his influence with the people, the treatise cannot well have been current in his lifetime. A contemporary, Conrad of Waldhausen, holding similar views, joined Miltz in opposing the mendicant friars as Wiclif was doing at the same period; and the King of Bohemia (the emperor Charles IV) gave zealous countenance to both. A follower of Miltz, Matthias of Janow, a prebendary of Prague, holding the same views as to Anti-christ, wrote a book on *The Abomination of Desolation of Priests and Monks*, and yet another to similar effect.

There was thus a considerable movement in the direction of

<sup>1</sup> Huss, in his youth, at first turned from Wiclif's writings with horror. Bonnechese, *The Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1844, i, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Krasinski, *Histor. Sketch of the Reformation in Poland*, 1838, i, 58.

<sup>3</sup> Krasinski, *Sketch of Relig. Hist. of Slav. Nations*, ed. 1851, pp. 26-27.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, ix, 242 sq.; Hardwick, pp. 426-27. Miltz effected a remarkable reformation of life in Prague. Neander, p. 241.



Church reform before either Huss or Wiclif was heard in Bohemia; and a Bohemian king had shown a reforming zeal, apparently not on financial motives, before any other European potentate. And whereas racial jealousy of the dominant Italians was a main factor in the movement of Luther, the much more strongly motivated jealousy of the Czechs against the Germans who exploited Bohemia was a main element in the salient movement of the Hussites.<sup>1</sup> Called in to work the silver mines, and led further by the increasing field for commerce and industry,<sup>2</sup> the more civilized Germans secured control of the Czech church and monasteries, appropriating most of the best livings. As they greatly predominated also at the University of Prague, Huss, whose inspiration was largely racial patriotism, wrought with his colleague Jerome to have the university made strictly national.<sup>3</sup> When, accordingly, the German heads of the university still (1403 and 1408) condemned the doctrines of Wiclif as preached by Huss, the motives of the censors were as much racial and economic as theological; that is to say, the "Teutonic conscience" operated in its own interest to the exaltation of papal rule against the Czech conscience.

The first crisis in the racial struggle ended in Huss's obtaining a royal decree (1409) giving three votes in university affairs (wherein, according to medieval custom, the voting was by nations) to the Bohemians, and only one to the Germans, though the latter were the majority. Thereupon a multitude of the German students marched back to Germany, where there was founded for them the university of Leipzig;<sup>4</sup> and the racial quarrel was more envenomed than ever.

At the same time the ecclesiastical authorities, closely allied with the German interest, took up the cause of the Church against heresy; and Archbishop Shinko of Prague, having procured a papal bull, caused a number of Wiclifian and other manuscripts to be burned<sup>5</sup> (1410), soon after excommunicating Huss. The now nationalist university protested, and the king sequestered the estates of the archbishop on his refusal to indemnify the owners of the manu-

<sup>1</sup> See the very intelligent survey of the situation in Kautsky's *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1897, p. 35 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Kautsky, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> K. Raumer, *Contrib. to the Hist. of the German Universities*, New York, 1850, p. 19; Dr. Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii, pt. i, 223-26; Bonnechese, i, 78; Mosheim, 15 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 6; Gieseler, Per. iii, Div. v, § 150; Krasinski, as cited, pp. 31-33.

<sup>4</sup> Krasinski, *Sketch*, p. 33; Kautsky, p. 43; MacLaine's note to Mosheim, as last cited; Rashdall, pp. 225-26, 254. The exodus has been much exaggerated. Only 602 were enrolled at Leipzig.

<sup>5</sup> Many of these were of great beauty and value, and must have been owned by rich men. Krasinski, *Sketch*, p. 34.

scripts. In 1411, further, Huss denounced the proposed papal crusade against Naples, and in 1412 the sale of indulgences by permission of Pope John XXIII, exactly as Luther denounced those of Leo X a century later, calling the Pope Antichrist in the Lutheran manner, while his partizans burned the papal bulls.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, he preached against image-worship, auricular confession, ceremonialism, and clerical endowments.<sup>2</sup> At the Council of Constance (1415), accordingly, there was arrayed against him a solid mass of German churchmen, including the ex-rector of Prague University, now bishop of Misnia. Further, the Germans were scholastically, as a rule, Nominalists, and Huss a Realist; and as Gerson, the most powerful of the French prelates, was zealous for the former school, he threw his influence on the German side,<sup>3</sup> as did the Bishop of London on the part of England.<sup>4</sup> The forty-five Wiclifian heresies, therefore, were re-condemned; Huss was sentenced to imprisonment, though he had gone to the Council under a letter of safe-conduct from the emperor;<sup>5</sup> and on his refusal to retract he was burned alive (July 6, 1415). Jerome, taking flight, was caught, and, being imprisoned, recanted; but later revoked the recantation and was burned likewise (May 30, 1416).

The subsequent fortunes of the Hussite party were determined as usual by the political and economic forces. The King of Bohemia had joyfully accepted Huss's doctrine that the tithes were not the property of the churchmen; and had locally protected him as his "fowl with the golden eggs," proceeding to plunder the Church as did the German princes in the next age.<sup>6</sup> When, later, the revolutionary Hussites began plundering churches and monasteries, the Bohemian nobles in their turn profited,<sup>7</sup> and became good Hussites accordingly; while yet another aristocracy was formed in Prague by the citizens who managed the confiscations there.<sup>8</sup> As happened earlier in Hungary and later in Germany, again, there followed a revolt of the peasants against their extortionate masters;<sup>9</sup> and there resulted a period of ferocious civil war and exacerbated fanaticism. Ziska, the Hussite leader, had been a strong anti-German;<sup>10</sup> and when the emperor entered into the struggle the racial hatred grew more intense than ever. On the Hussite side the claim for "the

<sup>1</sup> Hardwick, p. 433. Jerome caused the bull to be "fastened to an immodest woman," and so paraded through the town before being burnt. Gieseler, iv, 114, note 15.

<sup>2</sup> Bonnechese, ii, 122; Gieseler, as cited.

<sup>3</sup> See Mosheim's very interesting note; and Gieseler, iv, 104-105. <sup>4</sup> Krasinski, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> For an account of the devices of Catholic historians to explain away the Council's treachery see Bonnechese, note E. to vol. i, p. 270. The Council itself simply declared that faith was not to be kept with a heretic. *Id.* p. 271; Gieseler, p. 121.

<sup>6</sup> Bonnechese, ii, 118-20. Cp. Krasinski, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Kautsky, pp. 48-49.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> Krasinski, p. 65.



cup" (that is, the administration of the eucharist with wine as well as bread, in the original manner, departed from by the Church in the eleventh century) indicated the nature of the religious feeling involved. More memorable was the communistic zeal of the advanced section of the Taborites (so called from the town of Tabor, their headquarters), who anticipated the German movement of the Anabaptists,<sup>1</sup> a small minority of them seeking to set up community of women. For the rest, all the other main features of later Protestantism came up at the same time—the zealous establishment of schools for the young;<sup>2</sup> the insistence on the Bible as the sole standard of knowledge and practice; inflexible courage in warfare and good military organization, with determined denial of sacerdotal claims.<sup>3</sup>

The ideal collapsed as similar ideals did before and afterwards. First the main body of the Hussites, led by Ziska, though at war with the Catholics in general and the Germans in particular, warred murderously also on the extremer communists, called the Adamites, and destroyed them (1421). Then, as the country became more and more exhausted by the civil war, the common people gradually fell away from the Taborites, who were the prime fanatics of the period. The zeal of the communist section, too, itself fell away; and at length, in 1434, the Taborites, betrayed by one of their generals, were defeated with great slaughter by the nobles in the battle of Lipan. Meanwhile, the upper aristocracy had reaped the economic fruits of the revolution at the expense of townsmen, small proprietors, and peasants;<sup>4</sup> and, just as the lot of the German peasants in Luther's day was worse after their vain revolt than before, so the Bohemian peasantry at the close of the fifteenth century had sunk back to the condition of serfdom from which they had almost completely emerged at the beginning. It is doubtful, indeed, whether the material lot of the poor was bettered in any degree at any stage of the Protestant revolution, in any country. So little efficacy for social betterment has a movement guided by a light set above reason.

That there was in the period some Christian freethinking of a finer sort than the general Taborite doctrine is proved by the recovery of the unprinted work of the Czech Peter Helchitsky (Chelcicky), *The Net of Faith*, which impeached the current orthodoxy and the ecclesiastico-political system on the lines of the more

<sup>1</sup> See their principles stated in Kautsky, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Aeneas Sylvius, who detested the Taborites, declared them to have only one good quality, the love of letters. Letter to Carvajal, cited by Krasinski, p. 93, note.

<sup>3</sup> Kautsky, pp. 59-67.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 76.

exalted of the Paulicians and the Lollards, very much to the same effect as the modern gospel of Tolstoy. In the midst of a party of warlike fanatics Helchitsky denounced war as mere wholesale murder, taught the sinfulness of wealth, declaimed against cities as the great corrupters of life, and preached a peaceful and non-resistant anarchism, ignoring the State. But his party in turn developed into that of the Bohemian Brethren, an intensely Puritan sect, opposed to learning, and ashamed of the memory of the communism in which their order began.<sup>1</sup> Of permanent gain to culture there is hardly a trace in the entire evolution.

#### § 4. *Anti-Papalism in Hungary*

As in Bohemia, so in Hungary, there was a ready popular inclination to religious independence of Rome before the Lutheran period. The limited sway of the Hungarian monarchy left the nobles abnormally powerful, and their normal jealousy of the wealth of the Church made them in the thirteenth century favourable to the Waldenses and recalcitrant to the Inquisition.<sup>2</sup> In the period of the Hussite wars a similar protection was long given to the thousands of refugees led by Ziska from Bohemia into Hungary in 1424.<sup>3</sup> The famous king Matthias Corvinus, who put severe checks on clerical revenue, had as his favourite court poet the anti-papal bishop of Wardein, John, surnamed Pannonicus, who openly derided the Papal Jubilee as a financial contrivance.<sup>4</sup> Under Matthias's successor, the ill-fated Uladislav II, began a persecution, pushed on by his priest-ruled queen (1440), which drove many Hussites into Wallachia; and at the date of Luther's movement the superior clergy of Hungary were a powerful body of feudal nobles, living mainly as such, wielding secular power, and impoverishing the State.<sup>5</sup> As the crusade got up by the papacy against the Turks (1514) drew away many serfs, and ended in a peasant war against the nobility, put down with immense slaughter, and followed by oppression both of peasants and small landholders, there was a ready hearing for the Lutheran doctrines in Hungary. Nowhere, probably, did so many join the Reformation movement in so short a time.<sup>6</sup> As elsewhere, a number of the clergy came forward; and the resistance of the rest was proportionally severe, though Queen

<sup>1</sup> Kautsky, pp. 78-82. See further the account of Helchitsky's book in Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary* (anon.), Eng. tr. 1854, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 24, 32, citing the chronicler Thurnschwamm.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 23, 28.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 29-31.



Mary, the wife of King Louis II, was pro-Lutheran.<sup>1</sup> Books were burned by cartloads; and the diet was induced to pass a general decree for the burning of all Lutherans.<sup>2</sup> The great Turkish invasion under Soliman (1526) could not draw the priests from their heresy-hunt; but the subsequent division of sovereignty between John Zapoyla and Ferdinand I, and above all the disdainful tolerance of the Turkish Sultan in the parts under his authority,<sup>3</sup> permitted of a continuous spread of the anti-papal doctrine. About 1546 four bishops joined the Lutheran side, one getting married; and in Transylvania in particular the whole Church property was ere long confiscated to "the State"; so that in 1556, when only two monasteries remained, the Bishop withdrew. Of the tithes, it is said, the Protestant clergy held three-fourths, and retained them till 1848.<sup>4</sup> In 1559, according to the same authority, only three families of magnates still adhered to the pope; the lesser nobility were nearly all Protestant; and the Lutherans among the common people were as thirty to one.<sup>5</sup>

As a matter of course, Church property had been confiscated on all hands by the nobles, Ferdinand having been unable to hinder them. Soon after the battle of Mohács (1526) the nobles in diet decided not to fill up the places of deceased prelates, but to make over the emoluments of the bishoprics to "such men as deserved well of their country." Within a short time seven great territories were so accorded to as many magnates and generals, "nearly all of whom separated from the Church of Rome, and became steady supporters of the Reformation."<sup>6</sup> The Hungarian "Reformation" was thus remarkably complete.

Its subsequent decadence is one of the proofs that, even as the Reformation movement had succeeded by secular force, so it was only to be maintained on the same footing by excluding Catholic propaganda. In Hungary, as elsewhere, strife speedily arose among Reformers on the two issues on which reason could play within the limits of Scripturalism—the doctrine of the eucharist and the divinity of Jesus. On the former question the majority took the semi-rationalist view of Zwingli, making the eucharist a simple commemoration; and a strong minority in Transylvania became Socinian. The Italian Unitarian Giorgio Biandrata (or Blandrata<sup>7</sup>), driven to Poland from Switzerland for his anti-trinitarianism, and called from Poland to be the physician of the Prince of Transylvania,

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary*, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 69-70.

<sup>7</sup> Called Blandvater in the History above cited, which is copied in this error by Hardwick.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 58.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 45.

organized a ten days' debate between Trinitarians and Unitarians at Weissenberg in 1568; and at the close the latter obtained from the nobles present all the privileges enjoyed by the Lutherans, even securing control of the cathedral and schools of Clausenburg.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that this, the most advanced movement of Protestantism, has practically held its ground in Transylvania to modern times.<sup>2</sup>

The advance, however, meant desperate schism, and disaster to the main Protestant cause. The professors of Wittenberg appealed to the orthodox authorities to suppress the heresy, with no better result than a public repudiation of the doctrine of the Trinity at the Synod of Wardein,<sup>3</sup> and an organization of the Unitarian Churches. In due course these in turn divided. In 1578 Biandrata's colleague, Ferencz Davides, contended for a cessation of prayers to Christ, whereupon Biandrata invited Fausto Sozzini from Basel to confute him; and the confutation finally took the shape of a sentence of perpetual imprisonment on Davides in 1579 by the Prince of Transylvania, to whom Biandrata and Sozzini referred the dispute. The victim died in a few days—by one account, in a state of frenzy.<sup>4</sup> Between the Helvetic and Augsburg confessionalists, meanwhile, the strife was equally bitter; and it needed only free scope for the new organization of the Jesuits to secure the reconquest of the greater part of Hungary for the Catholic Church.

The course of events had shown that the Protestant principle of private judgment led those who would loyally act on it further and further from the historic faith; and there was no such general spirit of freethought in existence as could support such an advance. In contrast with the ever-dividing and mutually anathematizing parties of the dissenters, the ostensible solidity of the Catholic Church had an attraction which obscured all former perception of her corruptions; and the fixity of her dogma reassured those who recoiled in horror from Zwinglianism and Socinianism, as the adherents of these systems recoiled in turn from that of Davides. Only the absolute suppression of the Jesuits, as in Elizabethan England, could have saved the situation; and the political circumstances which had facilitated the spread of Protestantism were equally favourable to the advent of the reaction. As the Huguenot nobles in France gradually withdrew from their sect in the seven-

<sup>1</sup> Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 708.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Mosheim, last cit.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biog.* ii, 257-60. Schlegel, as cited. Biandrata later gave up his Unitarianism, turning either Jesuit or Protestant. He was murdered by his nephew for his money. Wallace, ii, 144.



teenth century, so the Protestant nobles in Hungary began to withdraw from theirs towards the end of the sixteenth. What the Jesuits could not achieve by propaganda was compassed by imperial dragonnades; and in 1601 only a few Protestant congregations remained in all Styria and Carinthia.<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, however, the Jesuits wrought much by sheer polemic, the pungent writings of their Cardinal Pazmány having the effect of converting a number of nobles;<sup>2</sup> while the Protestants, instead of answering the most effective of Pazmány's attacks, *The Guide to Truth*, spent their energies in fighting each other.<sup>3</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there ensued enough of persecution by the Catholic rulers to have roused a new growth of Protestantism, if that could longer avail; but the balance of forces remained broadly unchanged. Orthodox Protestantism and orthodox Unitarianism, having no new principle of criticism as against those turned upon themselves by the Jesuits, and no new means of obtaining an economic leverage, have made latterly no headway against Catholicism, which is to-day professed by more than half the people of Hungary, while among the remainder the Greek Catholics and Greek Orientals respectively outnumber the Helvetic and Lutheran Churches. The future is to some more searching principle of thought.

#### § 5. Protestantism in Poland

The chief triumph of the Jesuit reaction was won in Poland; and there, perhaps, is to be found the best illustration of the failure of mere Protestantism, on the one hand, to develop a self-maintaining intellectual principle, and the worse failure, on the other hand, of an organized and unresisted Catholicism to secure either political or intellectual vitality.

Opposition to the papacy on nationalist as well as on general grounds is nearly as well marked in Polish history as in Bohemian, from the pagan period onwards, the first Christian priesthood being chiefly foreign,<sup>4</sup> while, as in Bohemia, the people clung to vernacular worship. In 1078 we find King Boleslav the Dauntless (otherwise the Cruel) executing the Bishop of Cracow, taxing the lands of the Church, and vetoing the bestowal of posts on foreigners.<sup>5</sup> He in turn was driven into exile by a combination of clergy and nobles. A century later a Polish diet vetoes the confiscation of the property

<sup>1</sup> *History* cited, p. 109. As to the persecutions see pp. 108-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 128-29, 132.

<sup>4</sup> Krasinski, *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, 1838, i, 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 30-34.

of deceased bishops by the sovereign princes of the various provinces; and a generation later still the veto is seen to be disregarded.<sup>1</sup> In the middle of the thirteenth century there are further violent quarrels between dukes and clergy over tithes, the former successfully ordering and the latter vainly resisting a money commutation; till in 1279 Duke Boleslav of Cracow is induced to grant the bishops almost unlimited immunities and powers.<sup>2</sup> Under Casimir the Great (1333-1370) further strifes occur on similar grounds between the equestrian order and the clergy, the king sometimes supporting the latter against the former, as in the freeing of serfs, and sometimes enforcing taxation of Church lands with violence.<sup>3</sup> In the next reign the immunities granted by Boleslav in 1279 are cancelled by the equestrian order, acting in concert. And while these strifes had all been on economic grounds, we meet in 1341 with a heretical movement, set up by John Pirnensis, who denounced the pope as Antichrist in the fashion of the Bohemian reformers of the next generation. The people of Breslau seem to have gone over bodily to the heresy; and when the Inquisition of Cracow attempted forcible repression the Chief Inquisitor was murdered in a riot.<sup>4</sup>

It was thus natural that in the fourteenth century the Hussite movement should spread greatly in Poland, and the papacy be defied in matters of nomination by the king.<sup>5</sup> The Poles had long frequented the university of Prague; and Huss's colleague Jerome was called in to organize the university of Cracow in 1413. Against the Hussite doctrines the Catholic clergy had to resort largely to written polemic,<sup>6</sup> their power being small; though the king confirmed their synodical decree making heresy high treason. In 1450 Poland obtained its law of Habeas Corpus,<sup>7</sup> over two centuries before England; and under that safeguard numbers of the nobility declared themselves Hussites. In 1435 some of the chief of these formed a confederation against Church and crown; and in 1439 they proclaimed an abolition of tithes, and demanded, on the lines of the earlier English Lollards, that the enormous estates of the clergy should be appropriated to public purposes. In the diet of 1459, again, a learned noble, John Ostrorog, who had studied at Padua, delivered an address, afterwards expanded into a Latin book, denouncing the revenue exactions of the papacy, and proposing to confiscate the annates, or first fruits of ecclesiastical offices so exacted; proceeding further to bring against the Polish clergy in

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 55-56.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, 40-42.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 47-50.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 65-66.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 67.



general all the usual charges of simony, avarice, and fraud, and indicting the mendicant orders as having demoralized the common people.<sup>1</sup>

The Poles having no such nationalist motive in their Hussitism as had the Bohemians, who were fighting German domination, there took place in Poland no such convulsions as followed the Bohemian movement; but, when the Lutheran impulse came in the next century, the German element which had been added to Poland by the incorporation of the order and territory of the Teutonic knights in 1466 made an easy way for the German heresy. In Dantzic the Lutheran inhabitants in 1524 took the churches from the Catholics, and, terrorizing the town council, shut up and secularized the monasteries and convents.<sup>2</sup> In 1526, with due bloodshed, the king effected a counter-revolution in the Catholic interest; but still the heresy spread, the law of Habeas Corpus thwarting all clerical attempts at persecution, and the king being at heart something of an indifferentist in religion.<sup>3</sup> In the province of Great Poland was formed (1530-40) a Lutheran church, protected by a powerful family; and in Cracow a group of scholars formed a non-sectarian organization to evangelize the country. Among them, about 1546, occurred the first expression of Polish Unitarianism, the innovator being Adam Pastoris, a Dutch or Belgian priest, who seems to have used at times the name of Spiritus.<sup>4</sup>

On lines of simple Protestantism the movement was rapid, many aristocrats and clergy declaring for it;<sup>5</sup> and in the Diets of 1550 and 1552 was shown an increasingly strong anti-Catholic feeling, which the Church was virtually powerless to punish. In 1549 a parish priest publicly married a wife, and the bishop of Cracow abandoned the attempt to displace him. The next bishop, Zebrzydowski, a favourite pupil of Erasmus, was said by a Socinian writer of the period to have openly expressed disbelief in immortality and other dogmas;<sup>6</sup> but when in 1552 a noble refused to pay tithes, he ecclesiastically condemned him to death, and declared his property confiscated. The sentence, however, could not be put in force; and when the other heads of the Church, seeing their revenues menaced and their clergy in large part tending to heresy,<sup>7</sup> attempted a general and severe prosecution of backsliding priests, the resistance of the magistracy brought the effort to nothing.<sup>8</sup> The Diet of 1552

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, i, 91-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 111-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 139, 345, following Wengierski; Wallace, *Antitritin. Biog.* ii, Art. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Krasinski, pp. 143, 344, note.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* i, 163.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 173, note.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 134.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* pp. 176-77.

practically abrogated the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and despite much intrigue the economic interest of the landowners continued to maintain the Protestant movement, which was rapidly organized on German and Swiss models. It was by the play of its own elements of strife that its ascendancy was undermined.

On the one hand, an influential cleric, Orzechowski, who had married and turned Protestant, reconciled himself to Rome on the death of his wife, having already begun a fierce polemic against the Unitarian tendencies appearing on the Protestant side in the teaching of the Italian Stancari (1550); on the other hand, those tendencies gained head till they ruptured the party, of which the Trinitarian majority further quarrelled violently among themselves till, as in Hungary, many were driven back to the arms of Catholicism. In a Synod held in 1556, one Peter Goniondzki<sup>1</sup> (Gonesius)—who as a Catholic had violently opposed Stancari in 1550, but in the interim had studied in Switzerland and turned Protestant—took up a more anti-Trinitarian position than Stancari's, affirming three Gods, of whom the Son and the Spirit were subordinate to the Father. A few years later he declared against infant baptism—here giving forth opinions he had met with in Moravia; and he rapidly drew to him a considerable following alike of ministers and of wealthy laymen.<sup>2</sup>

It was thus not the primary influence of Lelio Sozzini, who had visited Poland in 1551 and did not return till 1558, that set up the remarkable growth of Unitarianism in that country. It would seem rather that in the country of Copernicus the relative weakness of the Church had admitted of a more common approach to freedom of thought than was seen elsewhere;<sup>3</sup> and the impunity of the new movements brought many heterodox fugitives (as it did Jews) from other lands. One of the newcomers, the learned Italian, George Biandrata, whose Unitarianism had been cautiously veiled, was made one of the superintendents of the "Helvetic" Church of Little Poland, and aimed at avoidance of dogmatic strifes; but after his withdrawal to Transylvania Gregorius Pauli, a minister of Cracow, of Italian descent, went further than Gonesius had done, and declared Jesus to be a mere man.<sup>4</sup> He further preached community of goods, promised a speedy millennium, and condemned the bearing of arms.<sup>5</sup> After various attempts at suppression and

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Peter of Goniond, a small town in Podlachia.

<sup>2</sup> Krasinski, i, 346-48; Mosheim, 16 Cent. sect. III, pt. ii, ch. iv, § 7; and Schlegel's and Reid's notes.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mosheim, chapter last cited, § 15 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Wallace, *Antitritin. Biog.* ii, 181-82.

<sup>4</sup> Krasinski, i, 357.



compromise by the orthodox majority, a group of Unitarian ministers and nobles formally renounced the doctrine of the Trinity at the Conference of Petrikov in 1562; and, on a formal condemnation being passed by an orthodox majority at Cracow in 1563, there was formed a Unitarian Church, with forty-two subscribing ministers, Zwinglian as to the eucharist, and opposed to infant baptism.<sup>1</sup> Ethically, its doctrine was humane and pacificatory, its members being forbidden to go to law or to take oaths; and for a time the community made great progress, the national Diet being, by one account, "filled with Arians" for a time.<sup>2</sup>

Meantime the Calvinist, Zwinglian, and Lutheran Protestant Churches quarrelled as fiercely in Poland as elsewhere, every compromise breaking down, till the abundant relapses of nobles and common people to Catholicism began to rebuild the power of the old Church, which found in "the Great Cardinal," Hosius, a statesman and controversialist unequalled on the Protestant side. Backed by the Jesuits, he gained by every Protestant dispute, the Jesuit order building itself up with its usual skill. And the course of politics told conclusively in the same direction. King Stephen Battory favoured the Jesuits; and King Sigismund III, who had been educated as a Catholic by his mother, systematically gave effect to his personal leanings by the use of his peculiar feudal powers. Under the ancient constitution the king had the bestowal of a number of life-tenures of great estates, called *starosties*; and the granting of these Sigismund made conditional on the acceptance of Catholicism.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Protestantism of the nobles, which had been in large part originally determined by economic interests, was dissolved by a reversal of the same force, very much in the fashion in which it was disintegrated in France by the policy of Richelieu at the same period. At the close of Sigismund's reign Protestantism was definitively broken up; and the Jesuit ascendancy permitted even of frequent persecutions of heresy. From these Unitarians could not escape; and at length, in 1658, they were expelled from the country, now completely subject to Jesuitism. In the country in which Protestantism and Unitarianism in turn had spread most rapidly under favouring political and social conditions, the rise of contrary conditions had most rapidly and decisively overthrown them.

The record of the heresy of Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary, in fine, is very much a reduplication of that of early Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> Krasinski, pp. 357-60.

<sup>2</sup> Krasinski, *Ref. in Poland*, ii, 93-94; *Rel. Hist. of Slav. Nations*, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 363.

Men presented with an obscure and self-contradictory "revelation" set themselves zealously to extract from it a body of certain truth, and in that hopeless undertaking did but multiply strife, till the majority, wearied with the fruitless quest, resigned themselves like their ancient prototypes to a rule of dogma under which the reasoning faculty became inert. Sane rationalism had to find another path, in a more enlightened day.

### § 6. *The Struggle in France*

The political and economic conditioning of the Reformation may perhaps best be understood by following the fortunes of Protestantism in France. When Luther began his schism, France might reasonably have been held a much more likely field for its extension than England. While King Henry was still to earn from the papacy the title of "Defender of the Faith" as against Luther, King Francis had exacted from the Pope (1516) a Concordat by which the appointment of all abbots and bishops in France was vested in the crown, the papacy receiving only the annates, or first year's revenue. For centuries too the French throne and the papacy had been chronically at strife; for seventy years a French pope, subservient to the king, had sat at Avignon; and before the Concordat the "Pragmatic Sanction," first enacted in 1268 by the devout St. Louis, had since the reign of Charles VII, who reinforced it (1438), kept the Gallican Church on a semi-independent footing towards Rome. By the account of the chancellor Du Prat in 1517, the "Pragmatic," then superseded by the Concordat, had isolated France among the Catholic peoples, causing her to be regarded as inclined to heresy.<sup>1</sup> In 1512 the Council of Pisa, convoked by Louis XII, had denounced Pope Julius II as a dangerous schismatic, and he had retaliated by placing France under interdict. In the previous year the French king had given his protection to a famous farce by Pierre Gringoire, in which, on Shrove Tuesday, the Pope was openly ridiculed.<sup>2</sup> Nowhere, in short, was the papacy as such less respected.

The whole strife, however, between the French kings and the popes had been for revenue, not on any question of doctrine. In the three years (1461-64) during which Louis XI had for his own purposes suspended the Pragmatic Sanction, it was found that 2,500,000 crowns had gone from France to Rome for "expetatives" and "dispensations," besides 340,000 crowns for bulls for arch-

<sup>1</sup> Lutteroth, *La Reformation en France pendant sa première période*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> A. A. Tilley, in vol. ii of *Camb. Mod. Hist. The Reformation*, ch. ix, p. 281.



bishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, priories, and deaneries.<sup>1</sup> This drain was naturally resisted by Church and Crown alike. Louis XI restored the Pragmatic Sanction. Louis XII re-enacted it in 1499 with new severity; and the effect of the Concordat of Francis I was merely to win over the Pope by dividing between the king and him the power of plunder by the sale of ecclesiastical offices.<sup>2</sup> It was accordingly much resented by the Parlement, the University, the clergy, and the people of Paris; but the king overbore all opposition. Though, therefore, he had at times some disposition to make a "reform" on the Lutheran lines, he had no such motive thereto as had the kings and nobles of the other northern countries; and he had further no such personal motive as had Henry VIII of England. Under the existing arrangement he was as well provided for as might be, since "the patronage of some six hundred bishoprics and abbeys furnished him with a convenient and inexpensive method of providing for his diplomatic service, and of rewarding literary merit."<sup>3</sup> The troubles in Germany, besides, were a warning against letting loose a movement of popular fanaticism.<sup>4</sup>

When, therefore, Protestantism and Lutheranism begun to show head in France, they had no friends at once powerful and zealous. Before Luther, in 1512, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples laid down in the commentary on his Latin translation of the Pauline Epistles the Lutheran doctrine of grace, and in effect denied the received doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>5</sup> In 1520 his former pupil, Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, invited him and some younger reformers, among them Guillaume Farel, to join him in teaching in his diocese; and in 1523 appeared Lefèvre's translation of and commentary on the gospels, which effectually began the Protestant movement in France.<sup>6</sup>

Persecution soon began. The king's adoring sister, Margaret, Duchess of Alençon (afterwards Queen of Navarre), was the friend of Briçonnet, but was powerless to help at home even her own intimates.<sup>7</sup> At first the king and his mother encouraged the movement at Meaux while sending out a dozen preachers through France to combat the Lutheran teaching;<sup>8</sup> but in 1524, setting out on his Italian campaign, the king saw fit to conciliate his clergy, and his clerical chancellor Du Prat began measures of repression, the queen-mother assenting, and Briçonnet's own brother assisting. Already, in 1521, the Sorbonne had condemned Luther's writings, and the

<sup>1</sup> Prof. H. M. Baird, *Hist. of the Rise of the Huguenots*, 1880, i, 33.  
<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, 35. <sup>3</sup> Tilley, as cited, p. 281.  
<sup>4</sup> Tilley, p. 282. The translation was notable as a revision of the Vulgate version, which was printed side by side with it.  
<sup>5</sup> Lutteroth, pp. 3-4; Baird, i, 79.  
<sup>6</sup> Michelet, *Hist. de France*, tom. x, *La Réforme*, ch. viii.  
<sup>7</sup> Lutteroth, p. 9.

Parlement of Paris had ordered the surrender of all copies. In 1523 the works of Louis de Berquin, the anti-clerical friend of Erasmus, were condemned, and himself imprisoned; and Briçonnet consented to issue synodal decrees against Luther's books and against certain Lutheran doctrines preached in his own diocese. Only by the king's intervention was Berquin at this time released.

The first man slain was Jean Chastellain, a shoemaker of Tournay, burned at Vic in Lorraine on January 12, 1525. The next was a wool-carder of Meaux,<sup>1</sup> who was first whipped and branded for a fanatical outrage, then burned to death, with slow tortures, for a further outrage against an image of the Virgin at Metz (July, 1525). Later, an ecclesiastic of the Meaux group, Jacques Banvan of Picardy, was prosecuted at Paris for anti-Lutheran heresy, and publicly recanted; but repented, retracted his abjuration, and was burned on the Place de Grève, in August, 1526; a nameless "hermit of Livry" suffering the same death about the same time beside the cathedral of Notre Dame.<sup>2</sup> Meantime Lefèvre had taken refuge in Strasburg, and, despite a letter of veto from the king, now in captivity at Madrid, his works were condemned by the Sorbonne. When released, the king not only recalled him but made him tutor to his children. Ecclesiastical pressures, however, forced him finally to take refuge under the Queen of Navarre at Nérac, in Gascony, where he mourned his avoidance of martyrdom.<sup>3</sup>

So determined had been the persecution that in 1526 Berquin was a second time imprisoned, and with difficulty saved from death by the written command of the captive king, sent on his sister's appeal.<sup>4</sup> And when the released king, to secure the deliverance of his hostage sons, felt bound to conciliate the Pope, and to secure funds had to conciliate the clergy, Marguerite, compelled to marry the king of Navarre, could do nothing more for Protestantism,<sup>5</sup> being herself openly and furiously denounced by the Catholic clergy.<sup>6</sup> Bought by a clerical subsidy, the king, on the occasion of a new outrage on a statue of the Virgin (1528),<sup>7</sup> associated himself with the popular indignation; and when the audacious Berquin, despite the dissuasions of Erasmus, resumed his anti-Catholic polemic, and in particular undertook to prove that Béda, the chief of the Sorbonne, was not a Christian,<sup>8</sup> he was re-arrested, tried, and condemned to be

<sup>1</sup> Michelet, éd. 1834, x, 308; Baird, i, 89, note.  
<sup>2</sup> See Baird, i, 91, note, as to the dates, which are usually put a year too early.  
<sup>3</sup> Baird, i, 95-96, and note. <sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 132. <sup>5</sup> Michelet, x, 314; Baird, i, 133-37.  
<sup>6</sup> Lutteroth, p. 15; Michelet, x, 337.  
<sup>7</sup> Other such outrages followed, and did much to intensify persecution.  
<sup>8</sup> Erasmus had said that one pamphlet of Béda's contained "eighty lies, three hundred calumnies, and forty-seven blasphemies" (Michelet, x, 320).



publicly branded and imprisoned for life. On his announcing an appeal to the absent king, and to the pope, a fresh sentence, this time of death, was hurriedly passed; and he was strangled and burned (1529) within two hours of the sentence,<sup>1</sup> to the intense joy of the ecclesiastical multitude.

After various vacillations, the king in 1534 had the fresh pretext of Protestant outrage—the affixing of an anti-Catholic placard in all of the principal thoroughfares of Paris, and to the door of the king's own room<sup>2</sup>—for permitting a fresh persecution after he had refused the Pope's request that he should join in a general extermination of heresy,<sup>3</sup> and there began at Paris a series of human sacrifices. It will have been observed that Protestant outrages had provoked previous executions; and there is some ground for the view that, but for the new and exasperating outrage of 1534, the efforts which were being officially made for a *modus vivendi* might have met with success.<sup>4</sup> This hope was now frustrated. In November, 1534, seven men were condemned to be burned alive, one of them for printing Lutheran books. In December others followed; and in January, 1535, on the occasion of a royal procession "to appease the wrath of God," six Lutherans (by one account, three by another) were burned alive by slow fires, one of the victims being a school-mistress.<sup>5</sup> It was on this occasion that the king, in a public speech, declared: "Were one of my arms infected with this poison, I would cut it off. Were my own children tainted, I should immolate them."<sup>6</sup>

Under such circumstances religious zeal naturally went far. In six months there were passed 102 sentences of death, of which twenty-seven were executed, the majority of the condemned having escaped by flight. Thereafter the individual burnings are past counting. On an old demand of the Sorbonne, the king actually sent to the Parlement an edict abolishing the art of printing;<sup>7</sup> which he duly recalled when the Parlement declined to register it. But the French Government was now committed to persecution. The Sorbonne's declaration against Luther in 1521 had proclaimed as to the heretics that "their impious and shameless arrogance must be restrained by chains, by censures—nay, by fire and flame, rather than confuted by argument";<sup>8</sup> and in that spirit the ruling clergy

<sup>1</sup> Baird, i, 143-44; Michelet, x, 321-26.

<sup>2</sup> Baird, i, 149.

<sup>3</sup> Lutteroth, p. 17; Michelet, x, 340 (giving the text of a contemporary record); Baird, i, 173-78—a very full account.

<sup>4</sup> See Baird, i, 176, note, as to the authenticity of the utterance, which was doubted by Voltaire.

<sup>5</sup> Michelet, x, 342; Baird, i, 169.

<sup>6</sup> Michelet, x, 338-39.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Tilley, p. 285.

<sup>8</sup> Cit. by Baird, i, 24, note.

proceeded, the king abetting them. In 1543 he ordained that heresy should be punished as sedition;<sup>1</sup> and in 1545 occurred the massacres of the Vaudois, before described. The result of this and further savageries was simply the wider diffusion of heresy, and a whole era of civil war, devastation, and demoralization.

Meantime Calvin had been driven abroad, to found a Protestant polity at Geneva and give a lead to those of England and Scotland. The balance of political forces prevented a Protestant polity in France; but nowhere else in the sixteenth century did Protestantism fight so long and hard a battle. That the Reformation was a product of "Teutonic conscience" is an inveterate fallacy.<sup>2</sup> The country in which Protestantism was intellectually most disinterested and morally most active was France. "The main battle of erudition and doctrine against the Catholic Church," justly contends Guizot, "was sustained by the French reformers; it was in France and Holland, and always in French, that most of the philosophic, historical, and polemic works on that side were written; neither Germany nor England, certainly, employed in the cause at that epoch more intelligence and science."<sup>3</sup> Nor was there in France—apart from the provocative insults to Catholics above mentioned—any such licence on the Protestant side as arose in Germany, though the French Protestants were as violently intolerant as any. Their ultimate decline, after long and desperate wars ending in a political compromise, was due to the play of socio-economic causes under the wise and tolerant administration of Richelieu, who opened the royal services to the Protestant nobles.<sup>4</sup> The French character had proved as unsubduable in Protestantism as any other; and the generation which in large part gradually reverted to Catholicism did but show that it had learned the lesson of the strifes which had followed on the Reformation—that Protestantism was no solution of either the moral or the intellectual problems of religion and politics.

### § 7. The Political Process in Britain

It was thus by no predilection or faculty of "race" that the Reformation so-called came to be associated historically with the northern or "Teutonic" nations. They simply succeeded in making permanent, by reason of more propitious political circumstances, a species of ecclesiastical revolution in which other races led the way.

<sup>1</sup> Baird, i, 221-22.

<sup>2</sup> It is endorsed by Professor Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, 2nd ed. p. 335.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. de la Civ. en France*, 13e édit. i, 18.

<sup>4</sup> See the case well made out by Buckle, ch. viii—1-vol. ed. pp. 311-13.



As Hussitism failed in Bohemia, Lollardism came to nothing in England in the same age, after a period of great vogue and activity.<sup>1</sup> The designs of Parliament on the revenues of the Church at the beginning of the fifteenth century<sup>2</sup> had failed by reason of the alliance knit between Church and Crown in the times when the latter needed backing; and at the accession of Henry VIII England was more orthodox than any of the other leading States of Northern Europe.<sup>3</sup> Henry was himself passionately orthodox, and was much less of a reformer in his mental attitude than was Wolsey, who had far-reaching schemes for de-Romanizing the Church alike in England and France, and who actually gave the king a handle against him by his plans for turning Church endowments to educational purposes.<sup>4</sup> The personal need of the despotic king for a divorce which the pope dared not give him was the first adequate lead to the rejection of the papal authority. On this the plunder of the monasteries followed, as a forced measure of royal finance,<sup>5</sup> of precaution against papal influence, and for the creation of a body of new interests vitally hostile to a papal restoration. The king and the mass of the people were alike Catholics in doctrine; the Protestant nobles who ruled under Edward VI were for the most part mere cynical plunderers, appropriating alike Church goods, lands, and school endowments more shamelessly than even did the potentates of Germany; and on the accession of Queen Mary the nation gladly reverted to Romish usages, though the spoil-holders would not surrender a yard of Church lands.<sup>6</sup> Had there been a succession of Catholic sovereigns, Catholicism would certainly have been restored. Protestantism was only slowly built up by the new clerical and heretical propaganda, and by the state of hostility set up between England and the Catholic Powers. It was the episode of the Spanish Armada that, by identifying Catholicism with the cause of the great national enemy, made the people grow definitely anti-Catholic. Even in Shakespeare's dramas the old state of things is seen not yet vitally changed.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Froude, *Hist. of England*, ed. 1872, i, 173; Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, Nares' ed. i, 17-18. Henry, says Burnet, "cherished Churchmen more than any king in England had ever done." Compare further Shaftesbury, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, in the *Characteristics*, Misc. iii, ch. i, ed. 1733, vol. iii, p. 151; Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, as cited above, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* 3rd ed. ii, 469, 471, 510.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Dr. J. H. Blunt, *The Reformation of the Church of England*, ed. 1892, i, 72-100. Wolsey was more patient with Protestant heresy than Henry ever was, though on his death-bed he counselled the king to put down the Lutherans.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Burnet, as cited, pref. p. xi, and p. 3; Heylyn, *Hist. of the Ref.* pref.; Blunt, i, 293-94. In 1530 the king had actually repudiated his debts, cancelling borrowings made under the Privy Seal, and thus setting an example to the Catholic King Philip II in a later generation.

<sup>6</sup> Heylyn, as cited, and i, 123-27, ed. 1849; A. F. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation*, 1896, pp. 5-6; J. E. G. De Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, 1902, pp. 62-65.

In Scotland, though there the priesthood had fewer friends than almost anywhere else, the act of Reformation was mainly one of pure and simple plunder of Church property by the needy nobility, in conscious imitation of the policy of Henry VIII, at a time when the throne was vacant; and there too Protestant doctrine was only gradually established by the new race of preachers, trained in the school of Calvin. In Ireland, on the other hand, Protestantism became identified with the cause of the oppressor, just as for England Romanism was the cause of the enemy-in-chief. "Race" and "national character," whatever they may be understood to mean, had nothing whatever to do with the course of events, and doctrinal enlightenment had just as little.<sup>1</sup> In the words of a distinguished clerical historian: "No truth is more certain than this, that the real motives of religious action do not work on men in masses; and that the enthusiasm which creates Crusaders, Inquisitors, Hussites, Puritans, is not the result of conviction, but of passion provoked by oppression or resistance, maintained by self-will, or stimulated by the mere desire of victory."<sup>2</sup> To this it need only be added that the desire of gain is also a factor, and that accordingly the anti-papal movement succeeded where the balance of political forces could be turned against the clerical interest, and failed where the latter predominated.

<sup>1</sup> The subject is treated at some length in *The Dynamics of Religion*, by "M. W. Wiseman" (J. M. R.), 1897, pp. 3-46; and in *The Saxon and the Celt*, pp. 92-97.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Stubbs, *Const. Hist. of England*, 3rd ed. iii, 638. Cp. Bishop Creighton, *The Age of Elizabeth*, p. 6; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 366.



## CHAPTER XII

## THE REFORMATION AND FREETHOUGHT

§ 1. *Germany and Switzerland*

IN the circumstances set forth in the last chapter, the Reformation could stand for only the minimum of freethought needed to secure political action. Some decided unbelief there was within its original sphere;<sup>1</sup> the best known instance being the private latitudinarianism of such humanist teachers as Mutianus (Mudt) and Crotus (Jäger), of the Erfurt University, in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Trained in Italy, Mutianus, after his withdrawal to private life at Gotha, in his private correspondence<sup>2</sup> avowed the opinion that the sacred books contained many designed fables; that the books of Job and Jonah were such; and that there was a secret wisdom in the Moslem opinion that Christ himself was not crucified, his place being taken by someone resembling him. To his young friend Spalatin he propounded the question: "If Christ alone be the way, the truth, and the life, how went it with the men who lived so many centuries before his birth? Had they had no part in truth and salvation?" And he hints the answer that "the religion of Christ did not begin with his incarnation, but is as old as the world, as his birth from the Father. For what is the real Christ, the only Son of God, save, as Paul says, the Wisdom of God, with which he endowed not only the Jews in their narrow Syrian land, but also the Greeks, the Romans, and the Germans, however different might be their religious usages." Though some such doctrine could be found in Eusebius,<sup>3</sup> it was remarkable enough in the Germany of four hundred years ago. But Mutianus went still further. To his friend Heinrich Urban he wrote that "there is but one God and one Goddess" under the many forms and names of Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpina, Tellus, Maria. "But," he

<sup>1</sup> Ranke, *History of the Popes*, Bohn tr. 1908, p. 60; Hardwick, *Church History: Reformation*, ed. 1886, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Much of this has never been published. Most of it is in a MS. Codex of the City Library at Frankfurt. Extracts in Tentzel's *Supplementum Historiæ Gothanæ*, 1701, in the *Narratio de Eobano Hesso* of J. Camerarius, 1553, etc. See Strauss's *Ulrich von Hutten*, 2te Aufl. 1871, p. 32, n. (ed. 1858, i, 44) et seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Eccles. Hist.* bk. i, ch. iv.

prudently added, "heed that you do not spread it abroad. One must hide it in silence, like Eleusinian mysteries. In religious matters we must avail ourselves of the cloak of fable and enigma. Thou, with the grace of Jupiter—that is, the best and greatest God—shouldst silently despise the little Gods. When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God. But enough of these all too high things." Such language hints of much current rationalism that can now only be guessed at, since it was unsafe even to write to friends as Mutianus did. On concrete matters of religion he is even more pronounced, laughing at the worship of the coat and beard and foreskin of Jesus, calling Lenten food fool's food, contemning the begging monks, rejecting confession and masses for the dead, and pronouncing the hours spent in altar-service lost time. In his house at Gotha, behind the Cathedral, his friend Crotus burlesqued the Mass, called the relics of saints bones from the gallows, and otherwise blasphemed with his host.<sup>1</sup>

But such esoteric doctrine and indoors unbelief can have had no part in the main movement; and though at the same period we see among the common people the satirist Heinrich Bebel, a Swabian peasant's son, jesting for them over the doctrines of trinity in unity, the resurrection, doomsday, and the sacraments,<sup>2</sup> it is certain that that influence counted for little in the way of serious thinking. It was only as separate and serious heresies that such doctrines could long propagate themselves; and Luther in his letter to the people of Antwerp<sup>3</sup> speaks of one sect or group as rejecting baptism, another the eucharist, another the divinity of Jesus, and yet another affirming a middle state between the present life and the day of judgment. One teacher in Antwerp he describes as saying that every man has the Holy Ghost, that being simply reason and understanding, that there is no hell, and that doing as we would be done by is faith; but this heretic does not seem to have founded a sect. The most extensive wave of really innovating thought was that set up by the social and anti-sacerdotal revolt of the Anabaptists, among whom occurred also the first popular avowals of Unitarianism.

In the way of literature, Unitarian doctrine came from John Campanus, of Jülich; Ludwig Hetzer, a priest of Zürich; and (in

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten*, as cited, pp. 33–35; Bezold, *Gesch. der deutschen Reformation*, 1890, p. 226. Bezold describes Mutianus as "der freigeistige Kanonikus zu Gotha," and points out, concerning his universalism, that "the historic Christ thus slips through his fingers."

<sup>2</sup> Bezold, as last cited. "Here is the skepticism kept in the background by Mutianus and Celtis, popularized in the rudest way."

<sup>3</sup> *Briefe*, ed. De Wette, iii, 60.



a minor degree) Johann Denk, school-rector in Nuremberg in 1524,<sup>1</sup> and afterwards one of the earlier leaders of the Anabaptist movement. All three were men of academic training; and Hetzer, who wrote explicitly against the divinity of Christ, had previously made with the aid of Denk a German translation, which was used by Luther, of the Hebrew prophets (1527). He was beheaded at Constance in 1529, nominally on the charge of practising free-love.<sup>2</sup> Campanus, who published a book attacking the doctrine of the Trinity and the teaching of Luther, had to leave Wittenberg in consequence, and finally died after a long imprisonment in Cleve. Denk—an amiable and estimable man<sup>3</sup>—is said, on very scant grounds, to have recanted before he died.

Not only from such thoroughgoing heresy, but from the whole Anabaptist secession, and no less from the rising of the peasants, the main Lutheran movement kept itself utterly aloof; and, though the Catholics naturally identified the extremer parties with the Reformation, its official or "Centre" polity made little for intellectual or political as distinct from ecclesiastical innovation. Towards the Peasants' Revolt, which at first he favoured, inasmuch as the peasants, whom he had courted, came to him for counsel, Luther's final attitude was so brutal that it has to-day almost no apologist; and in this as in some of his other evil departures the "mild" Melancthon went with him.<sup>4</sup> Their doctrine was the very negation of all democracy, and must be interpreted as an absolute capitulation to the nobles, without whose backing they knew themselves to be ecclesiastically helpless. In the massacres to which Luther gave his eager approval a hundred thousand men were destroyed.<sup>5</sup> "From this time onwards," pronounces Baur, "Luther ceases to be the representative of the spirit of his time; he represents only one side of it.....Thenceforth his writings have no more the universal bearing they once had, but only a particular.....In the political connection we must date from Luther's attitude to the Peasants' War the Lutheran theory of unconditional obedience. Christianity, as Luther preached it, has given to princes unlimited power of despotism and tyranny; while

<sup>1</sup> Karl Hagen, *Deutschlands lit. u. relig. Verhältnisse im Reformations-zeitalter*, 1868, ii, 110; letter of Capito to Zwingli, *Ep. Zwinglii*, i, 47; F. C. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte*, iv, 450; Trechsel, *Der proto-Antitrinitarismus vor Faustus Socinus*, 1839-44, i, 13-16, 33; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, 1850, i, art. 3, 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 689; Baur, iv, 450; Trechsel, i, 13-16.

<sup>3</sup> See a good account of him by Beard, Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, p. 204 sq.

<sup>4</sup> For an impartial criticism of their language see Henderson's *Short Hist. of Germany*, i, 321-23. Cp. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte*, iv, 73-76; A. F. Pollard in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii, 192-95; Beard, Hibbert Lect. on *The Reformation*, p. 200; and Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1897, pp. 117-28.

<sup>5</sup> Kohlrusch, *Hist. of Germany*, Eng. tr. p. 397.

the poor man, who, without right of protest, must submit to everything, will be compensated for his earthly sufferings in heaven."<sup>1</sup> Naturally the princes henceforth grew more and more Lutheran.

As naturally the crushed peasantry turned away from the Reformation in despair. Luther had in the first instance approached them, not they him. Before the revolt the reformers had made the peasant a kind of hero in their propaganda;<sup>2</sup> and when in the first and moderate stage of the rising its motives were set forth in sixty-two articles, these were purely agrarian. "There is no trace of a religious element in them, no indication that their authors had ever heard of Luther or of the Gospel."<sup>3</sup> Then it was that Luther commended them; and thereafter "a religious element began to obtrude."<sup>4</sup> When the overthrow began, doubtless sincerely reproaching the violences of the insurgents, he hounded on the princes in their work of massacre, Melancthon chiming in. Thereafter, as Melancthon admitted, the people showed a detestation of the Lutheran clergy;<sup>5</sup> and among many there was even developed a kind of "materialistic atheism."<sup>6</sup>

The political outcome, as aforesaid, was a thoroughly undemocratic organization of Protestantism in Germany; and, though the ecclesiastical tyranny which resulted from the more democratic system of Calvin was not more favourable to progress or happiness, the final German system of *cujus regio, ejus religio*—every district taking the religion of its ruler—must be summed up as a mere negation of the right of private judgment. Save for the attempt of a Frenchman, François Lambert of Avignon, to organize a self-governing church, German Protestantism showed almost no democratic feeling.<sup>7</sup> The one poor excuse for Luther was that the peasants had never recognized the need or duty of maintaining their clergy.<sup>8</sup> And seeing how the wealth of the Church went to the nobles and the well-to-do, and how downtrodden were the peasants all along, it would be surprising indeed if they had. They were not the workers of the ecclesiastical Reformation, and it wrought little or nothing for them.

The side on which the whole movement made for new light was its promotion of common schools, which enabled many of the people for the first time to read.<sup>9</sup> This tendency had been seen among the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the Hussites, and for the same reasons.

<sup>1</sup> To the same effect Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Capp. 391, 492.

<sup>2</sup> Pollard, as cited, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 179, 193.

<sup>4</sup> Ranke, as cited, pp. 459-64.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, *La Réforme*, ed. 1882, pp. 104, 332.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 461.



Such movements depended for their existence on the reading of the sacred books by the people for themselves; and to make readers was their first concern. In this connection, of course, note must be taken of the higher educational revival *before* the Reformation,<sup>1</sup> without which the ecclesiastical revolution could not have taken place even in Germany. As we saw, a literary expansion preceded the Hussite movement in Bohemia; and the stir of concern for written knowledge, delightedly acclaimed by Ulrich von Hutten, is recognized by all thoughtful historians in Germany before the rise of Luther. Such enlightenment as that of Mutianus was far in advance of Luther's own; and enlightenment of a lower degree cannot have been lacking. The ability to read, indeed, must have been fairly general in the middle class in Germany, for it appears that the partisan favour shown everywhere to Luther's writings by the printers and booksellers gave him an immense propagandist advantage over his Catholic opponents, who could secure for their replies only careless or bad workmanship, and were thus made to seem actually illiterate in the eyes of the reading public.<sup>2</sup>

As regards Switzerland, again, it is the admitted fact that "the educational movement began before the religious revival, and was a cause of the Reformation rather than a result."<sup>3</sup> So in Holland, the Brethren of the Common Lot (*Fratres Vitæ Communis*), a partially communistic but orthodox order of learned and unlearned laymen which lasted from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, did much for the schooling of the common people, and passed on their impulse to Germany.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Scotland the schools seem to have been fairly numerous even in the later Catholic period.<sup>5</sup> There, and in some other countries, it was the main merit of the Reformation to carry on zealously the work so begun, setting up common schools in every parish. In Lutheran Germany this work was for a long period much more poorly done, as regarded the peasantry. These had been trodden down after their revolt into a state of virtual slavery. "The broad midlands and the entire eastern part of Germany were filled with slaves, who had neither status nor property nor education";<sup>6</sup> and it was long before any

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burckhard, *De Ulrichi Hutteni Vita Commentarius*, 1717, i, 65. For a general view see Ranke, pp. 126-39.

<sup>2</sup> Jakob Marx, *Die Ursachen der schnellen Verbreitung der Reformation*, 1847, § 12.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. J. M. Vincent, in Prof. S. M. Jackson's *Huldreich Zwingli*, 1901, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, i, 19; *il. passim*; Mosheim, 15 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 23; and Bonet-Maury's thesis, *De Opera Scholastica Fratrum Vitæ Communis*, 1889.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, *History of Scotland*, iii, 399-401. But the end in view was probably, as Burton half admits, the recruiting of the Church. Cp. Cosmo Innes, *Sketches of Early Scotch History*, p. 134 sq., and *Scottish Legal Antiquities*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>6</sup> Menzel, Cap. 492.

large number of the people were taught to read and write,<sup>1</sup> the schooling given at the best being a scanty theological drill.<sup>2</sup>

But indeed for two-thirds of its adherents everywhere the Reformation meant no other reading than that of the Bible and catechisms and theological treatises. Coming as it did within one or two generations of the invention of printing, it stood not for new ideas, but for the spread of old. That invention had for a time positively checked the production of new books, the multiplication of the old having in a measure turned attention to the past;<sup>3</sup> and the diffusion of the Bible in particular determined the mental attitude of the movement in mass. The thinking of its more disinterested promoters began and ended in Bibliolatry: Luther and Calvin alike did but set up an infallible book and a local tyranny against an infallible pope and a tyranny centring at Rome. Neither dreamt of toleration; and Calvin, the more competent mind of the two, did but weld the detached irrationalities of the current theology into a system which crushed reason and stultified the morality in the name of which he ruled Geneva with a rod of iron.<sup>4</sup> It is remarkable that both men reverted to the narrowest orthodoxies of the earlier Church, in defiance of whatever spirit of reasonable inquiry had been on the side of their movement. "It is a quality of faith," wrote Luther, "that it wrings the neck of reason and strangles the beast";<sup>5</sup> and he repeatedly avowed that it was only by submitting his mind absolutely to the Scriptures that he could retain his faith.<sup>6</sup> "He despised reason as heartily as any papal dogmatist could despise it. He hated the very thought of toleration or comprehension."<sup>7</sup> And when Calvin was combated by the Catholic Pighius on the question of predestination and freewill, his defence was that he followed Christ and the Apostles, while his opponents resorted to human thoughts and reasonings.<sup>8</sup> On the same principle he dealt with the Copernican theory. After once breaking away from Rome both leaders became typical anti-

<sup>1</sup> Menzel, Cap. 492 (ed. 1837, p. 762).

<sup>2</sup> Ranke (p. 466) becomes positively lyrical over the happy lot of the peasant who received Luther's Catechism (1529). "It contains enduring comfort in every affliction, and, under a slight husk, the kernel of truths able to satisfy the wisest of the wise." Such declamation holds the place that ought to have been filled by an account of economic conditions.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Stubbs, *Const. Hist. of England*, iii, 627. The bishop, however, holds that in the time of Lollard prosperity the ability to read was widely diffused in England (p. 628); and it seems certain that in the first half of the sixteenth century printing multiplied enormously. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, ed. 1884, p. 103 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, 1877, bk. ii, ch. i; Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, éd. abrég. ch. xxiv-xxvii; and essay on "Machiavelli and Calvin" in the present writer's *Essays in Sociology*, 1903, vol. i.

<sup>5</sup> *Werke*, ed. Walch, viii, 2043 (*On Ep. to Galat.*), cited by Beard.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* viii, 1181 (*On I Cor. xv*). Cp. other citations in Beard, pp. 161-65.

<sup>7</sup> Green, *Short History*, ch. vi, § v, p. 315.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, ii, 282-83.



freethinkers, never even making Savonarola's pretence to resort to rationalist methods, though of course not more anti-rationalist than he. The more reasonable Zwingli, who tried to put an intelligible aspect on one or two of the mysteries of the faith, was scouted by both, as they scouted each other.

It is noteworthy that Zwingli, the most open-minded of the Reformers, owed his relative enlightenment to his general humanist culture,<sup>1</sup> and in particular to the influence of Pico della Mirandola and of Erasmus. It has even been argued that his whole theological system is derived from Pico<sup>2</sup> but it appears to have been from Erasmus that he drew his semi-rationalistic view of the eucharist,<sup>3</sup> a development of that of Berengar, representing it as a simple commemoration. Such thinking was far from the "spirit of the Reformation"; and Luther, after the Colloquy of Marburg (1529), in which he and Melanchthon debated against Zwingli and Oecolampadius, spoke of those "Sacramentarians" as "not only liars, but the very incarnation of lying, deceit, and hypocrisy."<sup>4</sup> Zwingli's language is less ferocious; but it is confessed of him that he too practised coercion against minorities in the case alike of the Anabaptists and of the monasteries and nunneries, and even in the establishment of his reformed eucharist.<sup>5</sup> The expulsion of the nuns of St. Katherinenthal in particular was an act of sheer tyranny; and the outcome of the methods enforced by him at Zürich was the bitter hostility of the five Forest Cantons, which remained Catholic. In war with them he lost his life; and after his death (1531) his sacramental doctrine rapidly disappeared from Swiss and Continental Protestantism,<sup>6</sup> even as it failed to make headway in England.<sup>7</sup> At his fall "the words of triumph and cursing used by Lutherans and others were shameful and almost inhuman."<sup>8</sup> In the sequel, for sheer lack of a rational foundation, the other Protestant sects in turn fell to furious dissension and persecution, some apparently finding their sole bond of union in hatred of the rest.

See Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 431, for

<sup>1</sup> He was educated at Basel and Berne and at Vienna University, and of all the leading reformers he seems to have had most knowledge of classical literature. Hess, *Life of Zwingli*, Eng. tr. 1812, pp. 2-7, following Myconius and Hottinger.

<sup>2</sup> Chr. Sigwart, *Ulrich Zwingli, der Charakter seiner Theologie, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Pico von Mirandola*, 1855, pp. 14-26. Prof. Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, p. 85, note, states that Sigwart later modified his views.

<sup>3</sup> So states Melanchthon, cited by Jackson, p. 85, note. Cp. pp. 201, 390-92.

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Jackson, p. 316. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 295. <sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 361. <sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 361, note.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* According to Heylyn, the Earl of Warwick countenanced the Zwinglians in his intrigues against the Protector Somerset; and their views were further welcomed by other nobles as making for the plundering of rich altars. *Hist. of the Reform. of the Ch. of Eng.* ed. 1849, pref. p. vii. But Heylyn appears to identify the Zwinglians at this stage with the Calvinists. Cp. p. x.

a sample of Lutheran popery; and as to the strifes cp. C. Beard, *The Reformation*, as cited, pp. 182-83; Dunham, *History of the Germanic Empire*, 1835, iii, 115-20, 153, 169; Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, ed. 1848, iii, 155-62; A. F. Pollard, in "The Cambridge Modern History," vol. ii, *The Reformation*, ch. viii, pp. 277-79. In the last-cited compilation, however, the strifes of the Protestant sects are barely indicated.

As to Luther's attitude towards new science, see his derision of Copernicus, on scriptural grounds, in the *Table Talk*, ch. lxix, *Of Astronomy and Astrology*. (The passage is omitted from the English translation in the Bohn Library, p. 341; and the whole chapter is dropped from the German abridgment published by Reclam.) Melanchthon was equally unteachable, and actually proposed to suppress the new teachings by punitive methods. (*Initia Doctrinæ Physicæ*, cited by White, *Warfare of Science and Theology*, 1896, i, 127.) It has been loosely claimed for Luther that he was "an enemy to religious persecution" (Lieber, *Manual of Political Ethics*, 1839, pt. i, p. 329), when the only evidence offered is (*id.* p. 205) that he declared against killing for heresy, because innocent men were likely to be slain—"Quare nullo modo possum admitttere, falsos doctores occidi." As early as 1524, renouncing his previous doctrine of non-coercion, he invoked the intervention of the State to punish blasphemy, declaring that the power of the sword was given by God for such ends (Bezold, p. 563). Melanchthon too declared that "Our commands are mere Platonic laws when the civil power does not give its support" (*id.* p. 565).

A certain intellectual illusion is set up even by Bezold when he writes that in Luther's resort to physical force "the hierarchical principle had triumphed over one of the noblest principles of the Reformation." "The Reformation" had no specific principles. Among its promoters were professed all manner of principles. The Reformation was the outcome of all their activities, and to make of it an entity or even a distinct set of theories is to obscure the phenomena.

Such flaws of formulation, however, are trifling in comparison with the mis-statement of the historic fact which is still normal in academic as in popular accounts of the Reformation. It would be difficult, for instance, to give seriously a more misleading account of the Lutheran reformation than the proposition of Dr. Edward Caird that, "in thrusting aside the claim of the Church to place itself between the individual and God, Luther had proclaimed the emancipation of men not only from the leading strings of the Church, but, in effect, from all external authority whatever, and even, in a sense, from all merely external teaching or revelation of the truth" (*Hegel*, 1883, p. 18). Luther thrust his own Church precisely where the Catholic Church had been; bitterly denounced new heresies;



and put the Bible determinedly "between the individual and God." In Luther's own day Sebastian Franck unanswerably accused him of setting up a paper pope in place of the human pope he had rejected. Luther's declaration was that "the ungodly papists prefer the authority of the Church far above God's Word, a blasphemy abominable and not to be endured, wherewith.....they spit in God's face. Truly God's patience is exceeding great, in that they be not destroyed" (*Table Talk*, ch. i).

Another misconception is set up by Pattison, who seems to have been much concerned to shield Calvin from the criticism of the civilized conscience (see below, p. 452). He pronounces that Calvin's "great merit lies in his comparative neglect of dogma. He seized the idea of reformation as a real renovation of human character" (*Essays*, ii, 23). If so, the reformer can have had little satisfaction, for he never admitted having regenerated Geneva. But the claim that he "comparatively" neglected dogma is true only in the sense that he was more inquisitorially zealous about certain forms of private conduct than was Luther. Gruet, indeed, he helped to slay upon political charges, taking a savage vengeance upon a personal opponent. But even in Gruet's case he sought later to add a religious justification to his crime. And it was in the name of dogma that he put Servetus to death, exiled Castalio, imprisoned Bolsec, broke with old friends, and imperilled the entire Genevan polity. Pattison's praise would be much more appropriate to Zwingli.

Luther, though he would probably have been ready enough to punish Copernicus as a heretic, was saved the evil chance which befel Calvin of being put in a place of authority where he could in God's name commit judicial murder. It is by acts so describable that the name of Calvin is most directly connected with the history of freethought. In nowise entitled to rank with its furtherers, he is to be enrolled in the evil catalogue of its persecutors. In the case of JACQUES GRUET on a mixture of political and religious charges, in that of MICHAEL SERVETUS on grounds of dogma pure and simple, he cast upon the record of Genevan Protestantism and upon his own memory an ineffaceable stain of blood. Gruet, an adherent of the Perrinist faction of Geneva, a party opposed to Calvin, on being arrested for issuing a placard against the clerical junto in power, was found, by the accounts of the Calvinist historians, to have among his papers some revealing his disbelief in the Christian religion.<sup>1</sup> This, however, proves to be a partisan account of the

<sup>1</sup> Henry, *Das Leben Calvins*, ii, Kap. 13, and Beilage 16 (Appendix not given in the English translation); Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, i, 399-400.

matter, and is hardly even in intention truthful. In the first place, it was admitted by Calvin that the placard, affixed by night to the chair of St. Peter in Geneva, was not in Gruet's handwriting; yet he was arrested, imprisoned, and *put to the torture* with the avowed object of making him confess "that he had acted at the instigation of François Favre, of the wife of Perrin, and of other accomplices of the same party whom he must have had." Perrin was the former Captain-General of Geneva, a popular personage, opposed to Calvin and detested by him. No match for the vigilant Reformer, Perrin had been through Calvin's intrigues deprived of his post; and there was a standing feud between his friends and the Calvinistic party in power.

The main part of the charges against Gruet was political; and the most circumstantial was based upon a draft, found among his papers, of a speech which he had ostensibly proposed to make in the General Council calling for reform of abuses. The speech contained nothing seditious, but the intention to deliver it without official permission was described as *lèse-majesté*—a term now newly introduced into Genevan procedure. The other documentary proofs were trivial. In one fragment of a letter there was an ironical mention of "notre galant Calvin"; and in a note on a margin of Calvin's book against the Anabaptists he had written in Latin "All trifles." For the rest, he was accused of writing two pages in Latin "in which are comprised several errors," and of being "inclined (*plutôt enclin*) to say, recite and write false opinions and errors as to the true words of Our Saviour."<sup>1</sup> Concerning his errors the only documentary proof preserved is from an alleged scrap of his writing in corrupt Latin, cited by Calvin as a sample of his inability to write Latin correctly: *Omnes tam humane quam divine que dicantur leges factae sunt ad placitum hominum*, which may be rendered, "All so-called laws, divine as well as human, are made at the will of men." In the act of sentence, he is declared further to have written obscene verses justifying free love; to have striven to ruin the authority of the consistory, menaced the ministers, and abused Calvin; and to have "conspired with the king of France against the safety of Calvin and the State."

To make out these charges, for the last of which there seems to be no evidence whatever, Gruet was put to the torture many times

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Calvin's letter to Viret, July 2, 1547 (*Letters of Calvin*, ed. Bonnet, Eng. tr. 1857, ii, 109), where it is alleged that in the two pages "the whole of Scripture is laughed at, Christ aspersed, the immortality of the soul called a dream and a fable, and finally the whole of religion torn in pieces. I do not think he is the author of it," adds Calvin; "but as it is in his handwriting he will be compelled to appear in his defence."



during many days "according to the manner of the time," says one of Calvin's biographers.<sup>1</sup> In reality such unmeasured use of torture was in Geneva a Calvinistic innovation. Gruet, refusing under the worst stress of torture to incriminate anyone else, at length, in order to end it, pleaded guilty to the charges against him, praying in his last extremity for a speedy death. On July 26, 1547, his half-dead body was beheaded on the scaffold, the torso being tied and the feet nailed thereto. Such were the judicial methods and mercies of a reformed Christianity, guided by a chief reformer.

The biographer Henry "cannot repress a sigh" over the thirty days of double torture of Gruet (ii, 66), but goes on to make a most disingenuous defence of Calvin, first asserting that he was not responsible, and then arguing that it would be as unjust to try Calvin by modern standards as to blame him for not wearing a perruque à la Louis XIV, or proceeding by the Code Napoléon! The same moralist declares (p. 68) that "it is really inspiring to hear how Calvin stormed in his sermons against the opposite party": and is profoundly impressed by the "deep religious earnestness" with which Calvin in 1550 claimed that "The council ought again to declare aloud that this blasphemer has been justly condemned, that the wrath of God may be averted from the city." Finally (p. 69), recording how Gruet's "book" was burned in 1550, the biographer pronounces that "The Gospel thus gained a victory over its enemies; in the same manner as in Germany freedom triumphed when Luther burnt the pope's bull."

As to the alleged anti-religious writings of Gruet, they were not produced or even specified till 1550, three years after his execution, when they were said to have been found partly in the roof of what had been his house (now occupied by the secretary of the consistory), partly behind a chimney, and partly in a dustbin. Put together, they amounted to thirteen leaves, in a handwriting which was declared by Calvin to be "juridically, by good examination of trustworthy men, recognized to be that of Gruet." The time and the singular manner of their discovery raises the question whether the papers had not been placed by the finders. The execution of Gruet, the first bloodshed under Calvin's régime, had roused new hatred against him; the slain man figured as a martyr in the eyes of the party to which he belonged; and it had become necessary to discredit him and them if the ascendancy of Calvin was to be secure. It is

<sup>1</sup> Stähelin, i, 400. Henry avows that Gruet was "subjected to the torture morning and evening during a whole month" (Eng. tr. ii, 66). Other biographers dishonestly exclude the fact from their narratives.

solely upon Calvin's account that we have to depend for our knowledge of Gruet's alleged anti-Christian doctrine; for the document, after being described and condemned, was duly burned by the common hangman. If genuine, it was a remarkable performance. According to the act of condemnation, which is in the handwriting of Calvin, it derided all religions alike, blasphemed God, Jesus, the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mary, Moses, the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the disciples, the gospels, the Old and New Testaments, the gospel miracles, and the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> Not a single phrase is quoted; we have mere general description, execration, and sentence.

Whether the document was a planned forgery, or part of a copy by Gruet of an anti-Christian treatise theretofore secretly circulated, will never be known. The story of Gruet soon swelled into a legend. According to one narrative, he had copied with his own hand and circulated in Geneva the mysterious treatise, *De Tribus Impostoribus*, the existence of which, at that period, is very doubtful.<sup>2</sup> On the strength of this and other cases<sup>3</sup> the *Libertines* have been sometimes supposed to be generally unbelievers; but there is no more evidence for this than for the general ascription to them of licentious conduct. It appears certain indeed that at that time the name *Libertine* was not recognized as a label for all of Calvin's political opponents, but was properly reserved for the sect so-called;<sup>4</sup> but even a vindicator of Calvin admits that "it is undeniable that the Libertines [*i.e.* the political opponents of Calvin, so-called by modern writers] of 1555 were the true political representatives of the patriots of 1530."<sup>5</sup> The presumption is that the political opposition included the more honest and courageous men of liberal and tolerant tendencies, as Calvin's own following included men of "free" life.<sup>6</sup> The really antinomian *Libertini* of the period were to be found among the pantheistic-Christian sect or school so-called, otherwise known as Spirituals, who seem to have been a branch of the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Calvin's letter to the Seignury of Geneva, in *Letters*, ii, 254-56.

<sup>2</sup> Henry, *Life of Calvin*, Eng. tr. ii, 47-48. Gruet's fragment can hardly have been the *De Tribus Impostoribus*, inasmuch as Calvin makes no mention of any reference to Mohammed in his fragment, whereas the title of the other book proceeded on the specification of Mohammed as well as Jesus and Moses. The existing treatise of that name, in any case, is of later date. Of the famous treatise in question, which was not published till long afterwards, Henry admits that it "professes to show tranquilly, and with regret, but without abuse," the fraudulent character of the three revealed religions. Concerning Gruet's essay he asks: "What are all the anti-Christian writings of the French Revolution compared with the hellish laughter which seemed to peal from its pages?" For this description he has not a line to cite.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, one man was accused of having blasphemed against a storm which terrified the pious.

<sup>4</sup> Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 1884-87, ii, 559; above, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Pattison, *Essays*, 1889, ii, 37.

<sup>6</sup> Dändliker, as cited, endorsing Roget. Cp. Hallam, *Litt. of Europe*, i, 306, and Hamilton, *Discus. on Philos. and Lit.* 2nd ed. p. 497, as to the "dissolution of morals" in the Lutheran world.



Brethren of the Free Spirit, or fraternity of the "Spirit of Liberty." These Calvin denounced in his manner; but in 1544 he had also forced into exile his former friend, Sebastian Castalio (or Castalion; properly Chatillon), master of the public school at Geneva, for simply rejecting his doctrine of absolute predestination, striving to have him driven in turn from Basel; and in 1551 he had caused to be imprisoned and banished a physician and ex-Carmelite, Jerome Bolsec, for publicly denying the same dogma. Bolsec, being prevented by Calvin's means from settling in any neighbouring Protestant community, returned to Catholicism,<sup>1</sup> as did many others. After Calvin's death Bolsec took his revenge in an attack on the reformer in his public and private character,<sup>2</sup> which has been treated as untrustworthy by the more moderate Catholic scholars who deal with the period;<sup>3</sup> and which, as regards its account of his private morals, is probably on all fours with Calvin's own unscrupulous charges against the "Libertines" and others who opposed him.

The tenets of the *Libertini* are somewhat mystifying, as handled by Calvin and his biographer Henry, both alike animated by the *odium theologicum* in the highest degree. By Calvin's own account they were mystical Christians, speaking of Christ as "the spirit which is in the world and in us all," and of the devil and his angels as having no proper existence, being identical with the world and sin. Further, they denied the eternity of the human soul and the freedom of the will; and Calvin charges them with subverting alike belief in God and morality (Henry, *Life of Calvin*, Eng. tr. ii, 45-46). The last charge could just as validly be brought against his own predestinarianism; and as regards ethics we find Calvin alternately denouncing the Libertines for treating all sin as unpardonable, and for stating that in Christ none could sin. Apparently he gives his inferences as their doctrines; and the antinomianism which, in the case of the trial of Madame Ameaux, Henry identifies with pantheism, was by his own showing of a Christian cast. Little credit, accordingly, can be given to his summing up that among the Libertines of Geneva there exhibited itself "a perfectly-formed anti-Christianity," which he calls "a true offspring of hell" (ii, 49). The residuum of truth appears to be that in the pantheism of this sect, as Neander says concerning the Brethren of the Free Spirit among the Beghards, there were "the foretokens of a thoroughly anti-

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, 14 Cent. sec. iii, Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 38-41; Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, chs. xxix, xxx.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la vie, mœurs, actes, doctrine, constance et mort de Jean Calvin, jadis ministre de Genève*, recueilli par M. Hierosme Hermes Bolsec, docteur médecin à Lyon. Lyon, 1577.

<sup>3</sup> The reprint of Bolsec's book prepared by M. L. F. Chastel (Lyon, 1875) appears to be faithful; but the Catholic animus shown deprives the annotations of critical value.

Christian tendency, hostile to everything supernatural, every sentiment of a God above the world; a tendency which contained.....the germ of absolute rationalism" (*Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Torrey's tr. ix, 536). Pantheism, logically extended, obviously reduces the supernatural and the natural to unity, and is thus atheistic. But that the pantheists of Geneva in Calvin's day reached logical consistency is incredible. The Libertine sect, in all likelihood, was only partially antinomian, and only in a very small part consciously anti-Christian.

At this period (1552), on the same issue of predestination, Calvin broke utterly with one of his closest friends, Jacques de Bourgogne, Sieur de Falais.<sup>1</sup> It seemed as if the Protestant polity were disrupting in a continuous convulsion of dogmatic strife; and Melanchthon wrote to Bucer in despair over the madness and misery of a time in which Geneva was returning to the fatalism of the Stoics, and imprisoning whosoever would not agree with Zeno. By this time it must have been clear to some that behind the strifes of raging theologians there lay a philosophic problem which they could not sound. It is therefore not surprising to learn that already Basel University, as fifty years before at Erfurt, there was a latitudinarian group of professors who aimed at a universal religion, and came near "naturalism" in the attempt;<sup>2</sup> while elsewhere in Switzerland, as we shall see later, there grew up the still freer way of thought which came to be known as Deism.

A great impulse to that development, as well as to simple Unitarianism, must have been given by the execution of Michael Servetus.<sup>3</sup> That ill-starred heretic, born of Spanish stock in France, brought to the propaganda of Unitarianism, of which he may be reckoned the inaugurator, a determination as strong as Calvin's own. Sent by his father to study civil law at Toulouse, he began there to study the Bible, doubtless under the stimulus of the early Protestant discussions of the time. The result was a prompt advance beyond the Protestant standpoint. Leaving Toulouse after two or three years' residence, he visited Bologna and Augsburg in the train of the confessor of Charles V. Thereafter he visited Lyons and Geneva, and had some intercourse with Oecolampadius

<sup>1</sup> Stähelin, ii, 293-301.

<sup>2</sup> Stähelin, ii, 293. Arminius pointed to this letter as a proof that Melanchthon had abandoned his early predestinarianism (*Declaratio* of 1608, xx, 2; *Works of Arminius*, ed. Nichols, i, 578). But of course Melanchthon had previously guarded himself in his *Loci Communes* (1545) and elsewhere. (*Id.* pp. 597-98.)

<sup>3</sup> Latinized name of Miguel Serveto, alias Reves, born at Tudela in Navarre in 1511, son of Hernando Villanueva, a notary of an Aragonese family, of which Villanueva had been the seat. The statement of De la Roche that Servetus was born in Aragon, though long current, is now exploded.



at Basel, where he put in the hands of a bookseller the signed manuscript of his first book, *De Trinitatis erroribus libri septem*. The bookseller sent it on to Hagenau, in Alsace, which as an "imperial city" seems to have had special freedom in the matter of book-publishing; and thither, after visiting Bucer and Capito at Strasburg, Servetus went to have it printed in 1531.<sup>1</sup> In this treatise, produced in his twenty-first year, he definitely rejects Trinitarianism, while putting somewhat obscurely his own idea of the nature of Jesus Christ—whom, it should be noted, he held in high reverence. In the following year he produced at the same place another small treatise, *Dialogorum de Trinitate libri duo*, wherein he recasts his first work, "retracting" it and apologizing for its crudity, but standing substantially to its positions. It was not till 1553 that he printed at Vienne in Dauphiné, without his name, his *Christianismi Restitutio*.<sup>2</sup> In the interval he had been doing scientific work as an editor of Ptolemy (1535, Lyons), and as a student of and lecturer on anatomy and medicine at Paris, where (1536) he met Calvin on his last visit to France. In 1538 he is found studying at Louvain; and, after practising medicine at Avignon and Charlieu, he again studies medicine at Montpellier. The Archbishop of Vienne, who had heard him lecture at Paris, established him at Vienne as his confidential physician (1541-53), and there it was that he produced the book for which he died. About 1545-46 he had rashly written to Calvin, sending him the MS. of the much-expanded recast of his books which later appeared as the *Restitutio*. Calvin sent a hostile reply, and on the same day wrote to Farel: "If he come, and my influence can avail, I shall not suffer him to depart alive." Servetus had denounced the papacy as fiercely as any Protestant could wish, yet his heresy on the question of the Trinity<sup>3</sup> was enough to doom him to instant death at Calvin's hands. Servetus could not get back his MS., and wrote to a friend about 1547 that he felt sure the affair would bring him to his death.<sup>4</sup> When in 1552-53 he had the book privately

<sup>1</sup> De la Roche, *Mémoires de Littérature*, cited in *An Impartial History of Servetus*, 1724, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Christianismi Restitutio*, h.e. *Totius ecclesiæ apostolicæ ad sua limina vocatio in integrum, restituta cognitione Dei, fidei christianæ, justificationis nostræ, regenerationis, baptismi, Cœnæ Domini manducationis. Restituito denique nobis regno cœlesti. Babilonis impia captivitate soluta, et antichristo cum suis penitus destructo*, 1553. Of this book De la Roche (1711) knew of no printed copy, having read it solely in MS. Perfect copies, however, are preserved in Vienna and Paris; and an imperfect one in Edinburgh University Library has been completed from the original draft, which has matter not in the printed copy. It has been pointed out that the book is not absolutely anonymous, inasmuch as it has at the end the initials M. S. V.—the V. standing for the name Villanova or Villanovanus, which he bore as a student at Louvain and put on the title-pages of his scientific works; and Servetus is actually introduced as an interlocutor in one of the dialogues.

<sup>3</sup> It is to be remembered, however, that he pronounced all Trinitarians to be "veros Atheos." *History of Servetus*, p. 131. <sup>4</sup> "Mibi ob eam rem moriendum esse certo scio."

printed at Vienne, and the bulk of the edition was sent to Lyons and Frankfort, the toils closed around him, the ecclesiastical authorities at Lyons being apprised of the facts by de Trie, a Genevan Protestant, formerly of Lyons. The whole Protestant world, in fact, was of one opinion in desiring to suppress Servetus's anti-Trinitarian books, and the wonder is that he had so long escaped both Protestant and Catholic fury. Luther had called his first book horribly wicked; and Melanchthon, who in 1533 foresaw from the second much dangerous debate, wrote in 1539 to the Venetian Senate to warn them against letting either be sold.<sup>1</sup> It is significant of the random character of Protestant as of Catholic thought that Servetus, like Melanchthon, was a convinced believer in astrology,<sup>2</sup> while Luther on Biblical grounds rejected astrology and the Copernican astronomy alike, and held devoutly by the belief in witchcraft. The superiority of Servetus consists in his real scientific work—he having in part given out the true doctrine of the circulation of the blood<sup>3</sup>—and his objection to all persecution of heresy.<sup>4</sup> Philosophically, he was more than a mere Scripturist. Though pantheism was not charged upon him, we have Calvin's testimony that he propounded it in the strongest form.<sup>5</sup>

Calvin's guilt in the matter begins with his devices to have Servetus seized by the Catholic authorities of Lyons<sup>6</sup>—to set misbelievers, as he regarded them, to slay the misbeliever—and his use of Servetus's confidential letters against him.<sup>7</sup> He was not repelling a heresy from his own city, but heretic-hunting far away in sheer malignity. The Catholics were the less cruel gaolers, and let their prisoner escape, condemning him to death at Vienne in absence. After some months of wandering he had the temerity to seek to pass into Italy by way of Geneva, and was there at length recognized, and arrested. After a long trial he was sentenced to be burned alive (Oct. 27, 1553). The trial at Geneva is a classic document in the records of the cruelties committed in honour of chimeras; and

<sup>1</sup> Melanchthon, *Epist.* lib. i, ep. 3; McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 96; Trechsel, *Lelio Sozini*, 1844, pp. 38-41.

<sup>2</sup> Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, 1877, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> See the careful account of Dr. Austin Flint, of New York, in his pamphlet, *Rabelais as a Physiologist*, rep. from *New York Medical Journal* of June 29, 1901.

<sup>4</sup> Willis, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Farel, Aug. 20, 1553 (*Letters*, Eng. tr. ii, 399). Cp. Henry, ii, 195-96.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* ch. xix. See the letter of Trie, given in Henry's *Life of Calvin* (Eng. tr. ii, 184-85), with the admission that Trie was in Calvin's counsels. Henry vainly endeavours to make light (pp. 181-82) of Calvin's written words to Farel concerning Servetus: "Si venerit, modo valeat mea autoritas, vivum exire nunquam patiar." Still, it must in fairness be remembered that Trie, by his own account, persuaded Calvin, who was reluctant, to his act of complicity with the inquisitors of Lyons. Cp. Bossert, *Calvin*, pp. 160-64.

<sup>7</sup> Willis, ch. xx. Cp. pp. 457, 503. The defence of Calvin in Mackenzie's *Life* (1809, p. 79) on the score that he was not likely to communicate with Catholic officials does not meet the case as to Trie. And cp. p. 83.



Calvin's part is the sufficient proof that the Protestant could hold his own with the Catholic Inquisitor in the spirit of hate.<sup>1</sup> It has been urged, in his excuse, that the doctrines of Servetus were blasphemously put; but in point of fact Calvin passed some of his bitterest denunciation on the statement, cited (from Lorenz Fries) in a note in Servetus's edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, that Judea is actually a barren and meagre country, and not "flowing with milk and honey." Despite the citation of ample proof, and the plea that the passage was drawn from a previous edition, it was by Calvin adjudged blasphemous in that it "necessarily inculpated Moses and grievously outraged the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> The language of Calvin against Servetus at this point is utterly furious. Had Servetus chanced to maintain the doctrine of the earth's motion, he would certainly have been adjudged a blasphemer on that score also; for in the Argument to his *Commentary on Genesis* (1563) Calvin doggedly maintains the Ptolemaic theory. His language tells of much private freethinking around him on the Mosaic doctrine, and his tone leaves no doubt as to how he would treat published heresy on that theme. The audacity of Servetus in suggesting that the 53rd chapter of Isaiah had historical reference to Cyrus is for him anathema.<sup>3</sup>

Even before this hideous episode, Calvin's passion of malevolence against his theological opponents in his own sect is such as to shock some of his adoring biographers.<sup>4</sup> All the Protestant leaders, broadly speaking, grew more intolerant as they grew in years—a fair test as between the spirit of dogma and the spirit of freethought. Calvin had begun by pleading for tolerance and clemency; Luther, beginning as a humanitarian, soon came to be capable of hounding on the German nobility against the unhappy peasants; Melancthon, tolerant in his earlier days, applauded the burning of Servetus;<sup>5</sup> Beza laboriously defended the act. Erasmus stood for tolerance; and Luther accordingly called him godless, an enemy of true religion, a slanderer of Christ, a Lucian, an Epicurean, and (by implication) the greatest knave alive.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ten years after the death of Servetus, Calvin calls him a "dog and wicked scoundrel" (Willis, p. 530; cp. *Hist. of Servetus*, p. 214, citing Calvin's Comm. on Acts xx); and in his *Commentary on Genesis* (i, 3, ed. 1838, p. 9) he says of him: "*Latrat hic obscoenus canis.*" And Servetus had asked his pardon at the end.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1896, i, 113; *History of Servetus*, 1724, p. 93 sq.; Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, i, 430.

<sup>4</sup> See Stäbelin, *Johannes Calvin*, ii, 300-308.

<sup>5</sup> F. A. Cox, *Life of Melancthon*, 1815, pp. 523-24; Willis, pp. 47, 511.

<sup>6</sup> *Table Talk*, ch. 43. Cp. Michelet's *Life of Luther*, Eng. tr. 1846, pp. 195-96; and Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 360-65. Michelet's later enthusiasm for Luther (*Hist. de France*, x, ch. v, ed. 1884, pp. 96-97) is oblivious of many of the facts noted in his earlier studies.

The burning of Servetus in 1553, however, marked a turning point in Protestant theological practice on the Continent. There were still to come the desperate religious wars in France, in which more than 300,000 houses were destroyed, abominable savageries were committed, and all civilization was thrown back, both materially and morally; and there was yet to come the still more appalling calamity of the Thirty Years' War in Germany—a result of the unstable political conditions set up at the Reformation; but theological human sacrifices were rapidly discredited. Servetus was not the first victim, but he was nearly the last.

The jurist Matthieu Gripaldi (or Gribaldo) lectured on law at Toulouse, Cahors, Valence, and Padua successively, and, finding his anti-Trinitarian leanings everywhere a source of danger to him, had sought a retreat at Fargias near Geneva, then in the jurisdiction of Berne. Venturing to remonstrate with Calvin against the sentence on Servetus, he brought upon himself the angry scrutiny of the heretic-hunter, and was banished from the neighbourhood. For a time he found refuge in a new professorship at Tübingen; but there too the alarm was raised, and he was expelled. Coming back to Fargias, he gave refuge to the heretic Valentinus Gentilis on his escape from Geneva; and again Calvin attacked him, delivering him to the authorities of Berne. An abjuration saved him for the time; but he would probably have met the martyr's fate in time had not his death by the plague, in 1564, guaranteed him, as Bayle remarks, against any further trial for heresy.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of theological bias on moral judgment is interestingly exemplified in the comment of Mosheim on the case of Servetus. Unable to refer to the beliefs of deists or atheists without vituperation, Mosheim finds it necessary to add to his account of Servetus as a highly-gifted and very learned man the qualification: "Yet he laboured under no small moral defects, for he was beyond all measure arrogant, and at the same time ill-tempered, contentious, unyielding, and a semi-fanatic." Every one of these characterizations is applicable in the highest degree to Calvin, and in a large degree to Luther; yet for them the historian has not a word of blame.

Even among rationalists it has not been uncommon to make light of Calvin's crimes on the score that his energy maintained a polity which alone sustained Protestantism against the Catholic Reaction. This is the verdict of Michelet: "The Renaissance, betrayed by the accident of the mobilities of France, turning to the wind of light volitions, would assuredly

<sup>1</sup> Bayle, *Art. GRIPAUD*; Christie, *Étienne Dolet*, 2nd ed. pp. 303-305. Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, ii, Art. 18.



have perished, and the world would have fallen into the great net of the fishers of men, but for that supreme concentration of the Reformation on the rock of Geneva by the bitter genius of Calvin." And again: "Against the immense and darksome net into which Europe fell by the abandonment of France nothing less than this heroic seminary could avail" (*Hist. de France*, vol. x, *La Réforme*: end of pref. and end of vol.). Though this verdict has been accepted by such critical thinkers as Pattison (*Essays*, ii, 30-32) and Lord Morley (Romanes Lecture on *Machiavelli*, 1877, p. 47), it is difficult to find for it any justification in history.

The nature of the proposition is indeed far from clear. Michelet appears to mean that Geneva saved Europe as constituting a political rallying-point, a nucleus for Protestantism. Pattison, pronouncing that "Calvinism saved Europe" (*Essays*, ii, 32), explains that it was by "a positive education of the individual soul"; and that "this, and this alone, enabled the Reformation to make head against the terrible repressive forces brought to bear by Spain—the Inquisition and the Jesuits" (p. 32). The thesis thus vanishes in rhetoric, for it is quite impossible to give such a formula any significance in the light of the history of Protestantism in Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, and Holland. It implies that where Protestantism finally failed—as in Italy, France, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Belgium, parts of Germany, and parts of Switzerland—it was because the individual spirit had not been educated enough, which is a mere omission to note the real economic and political causation. Neither Michelet nor Pattison had any scientific notion of the nature of the process.

If we revert to Michelet's claim, we get no more satisfaction. The very fact that Calvin's polity could subsist without any special military protection is the proof that it could have subsisted without the gross cruelty and systematic persecution which marked it out from the rest of the world, making Geneva "a kind of frozen hell of austerity and retribution and secret sin." To say otherwise is to say that freedom and toleration are less attractive to men than ferocity, tyranny, and gloom. Calvin drove many men back to Catholicism, and had his full share in the mortal schism which set Calvinists and Lutherans at daggers drawn for a century, while Catholicism re-conquered Poland and Bohemia and Hungary, held France, and nearly re-conquered Lutheran Germany. There is no reason to suppose that the Reformation would have gone otherwise in Britain, Scandinavia, and Holland had Geneva gone as far in tolerance as it actually did in intolerance. To call it, as Michelet does, an "asylum," in view of Calvin's expulsion or execution of every man who dared to differ from him, is courageous.

At the close of his argument (p. 41) Pattison sums up that,

"Greatly as the Calvinistic Churches have served the cause of political liberty, they have contributed nothing to the cause of knowledge." The admission is in the main valid; but the claim will not stand, unless "political liberty" is to be newly defined. The Calvinistic rule at Geneva was from the first a class tyranny, which became more and more narrow in its social basis. The Calvinist clergy and populace of Holland turned their backs on republican institutions, and became violent monarchists. The Calvinists of England and Scotland were as determined persecutors as ever lived. And, indeed, how should liberty anywhere flourish when knowledge is trodden under foot?

The treatment of Bernardino Ochino, who had turned Protestant after being vicar-general of the Capuchin order, shows the slackening of ferocity after the end of Servetus. Ochino in a late writing ventured guardedly to suggest certain relaxations of the law of monogamy—a point on which some Lutherans went much further than he—and was besides mildly heretical about the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> He was in consequence expelled with his family from the canton of Zürich (1563), at the age of seventy-six. Finding Switzerland wholly inhospitable, and being driven by the Catholics from Poland, where he had sought to join the Socinians, he went to die in Moravia.<sup>2</sup> This was no worse treatment than Lutherans and Calvinists normally meted out to each other;<sup>3</sup> and several of the Italian Protestants settled at Geneva who leant to Unitarian views—among them Gribaldo, Biandrata, and Alciati—found it prudent to leave that fortress of orthodoxy, where they were open to official challenge.<sup>4</sup> Finally, when the Italian Valentinus Gentilis, or Gentile, the anti-Trinitarian, variously described as Tritheist, Deist, and Arian, uttered his heresies at Geneva, he contrived, after an imprisonment, a forced recantation, and a public degradation (1558), to escape thence with his life, but was duly beheaded at Berne in 1566, refusing this time to recant.<sup>5</sup>

This ends the main Swiss era of theological murder; but a century was to pass before sectarian hatreds subsided, or the spirit of persecution was brought under control of civilization. In 1632, indeed, a Protestant minister, Nicholas Anthoine, was burned at Geneva on the charge of apostasy to Judaism. As he had been

<sup>1</sup> Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino of Siena*, Eng. tr. 1876, pp. 268-72, 287-92.

<sup>2</sup> McCrie, p. 230; Audin, ch. xxxv; Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into Ger. Rationalism*, 1828, p. 14 sq.; Beard, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> Stähelin, ii, 337. Biandrata went to Hungary, where, as we saw (p. 421), he turned persecutor, and then Protestant.

<sup>5</sup> Mosheim, 16 Cent. sec. iii, pt. ii, ch. iv, § 6; Audin, pp. 394-99; Aretius, *Short Hist. of Valentinus Gentilis*, Eng. tr. 1696; Stähelin, ii, 338-45; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, ii, Art. 20.



admittedly insane for a time, and had repeatedly shown much mental excitement,<sup>1</sup> his execution tells of a spirit of cruelty worthy of the generation of Calvin. The Protestant Bibliolatry, in short, was as truly the practical negation of freethought and tolerance as was Catholicism itself; and it was only their general remoteness from each other that kept the different reformed communities from absolute war where they were not, as in Switzerland, held in check by the dangers around them.<sup>2</sup> As it was, they had their full share in the responsibility for the furious civil wars which so long convulsed France, and for those which ultimately reduced Germany to the verge of destruction, arresting her civilization for over a hundred years.

To sum up. In Germany Protestantism failed alike as a moral and as an intellectual reform. The lack of any general moral motive in the ecclesiastical revolution is sufficiently proved by the general dissolution of conduct which, on the express admission of Luther, followed upon it.<sup>3</sup> This was quite apart from the special disorders of the Anabaptist movement, which, on the other hand, contained elements of moral and religious rationalism, as against Bibliolatry, that have been little recognized.<sup>4</sup> Of that movement the summing-up is that, like the Lutheran, it turned to evil because of sheer lack of rationalism. Among its earlier leaders were men such as Denk, morally and temperamentally on a higher plane than any of the Lutherans. But Anabaptism too was fundamentally scriptural and revelationist, not rational; and it miscarried in its own way even more hopelessly than the theological "reform." Lutheranism, renouncing the rational and ethical hope of social betterment, ran to insane dissension over irrational dogma; Anabaptism, ignorantly attaching the hope of social betterment to religious delusion, ran to irrational social schemes, ending in anarchy, massacre, and extinction. But the Lutheran failure was intellectually and morally no less complete. Luther was with good reason ill at ease about his cause when he died in 1546; and Melancthon, dying in 1560, declared himself glad to be set free from the *rabies theologorum*.<sup>5</sup>

The test of the new regimen lay, if anywhere, in the University of Wittemberg; and there matters were no better than anywhere

<sup>1</sup> See the *Historical Account* of his life and trial in the *Harleian Miscellany*, iv, 168 sq.

<sup>2</sup> See Stähelin, ii, 293, 304, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 417; A. F. Pollard, in *Cam. Mod. Hist.* vol. ii, ch. vii, p. 223; *The Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> See Beard, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 189-90, 196. The same avowal was made in the eighteenth century by Mosheim (16 Cent. sec. iii, pt. ii, § 5).

<sup>5</sup> F. A. Cox, *Life of Melancthon*, 1815, p. 544, citing Adam, *Vitæ philosophorum* (p. 934). Cp. pp. 528-29.

else.<sup>1</sup> German university life in general went from bad to worse till a new culture began slowly to germinate after the Thirty Years' War;<sup>2</sup> and the germs came mainly from the neighbouring nations. German Switzerland exhibited similar symptoms, the Reformation being followed by no free intellectual life, but by a tyranny identical in spirit and method with that of Rome.<sup>3</sup> It rests, finally, on the express testimony of leading Reformers that the main effect of the Reformation in the intellectual life of Germany was to discredit all disinterested learning and literature. Melancthon in particular, writing at dates as far apart as 1522 and 1557, repeatedly and emphatically testifies to the utter disregard of erudition and science in the interests of pietism, corroborating everything said to the same effect by Erasmus.<sup>4</sup>

On the social and political side the rule of the Protestant princes was not only as tyrannous but as indecorous as that of their Catholic days, each playing pope in his own dominions;<sup>5</sup> and their clergy were not in a position to correct them. Menzel notes that the normal drunkenness of the Protestant aristocracy at this period made current in Europe the expression "a German swine." And whereas Germany before the Reformation was at various points a culture force for Europe—whence the readiness in other nations at first to follow the Lutheran lead—it progressively became more and more of an object-lesson of the evils of heresy, thus fatally weakening the cause of Protestantism in France, where its fortunes hung in the balance.

Even in the matter of theology, Protestantism did not hold its own against Catholic criticism. Both began by discriminating in the scriptural canon, rejecting some books and depreciating others, all the while professing to make the Word of God their sole or final standard. When the Catholics pressed the demand as to how they could settle what was the true Word of God, their followers and successors could make no answer, and had to fall back on an indiscriminate acceptance of the Canon. Again, Luther and Calvin alike maintained the doctrine of "Assurance," and this was one of the points in Calvinism accepted by Arminius. The Catholics, naturally making the most of the admitted increase of sexual and other licence in Germany and elsewhere under Lutheranism, dwelt upon Luther's predestinarianism in general, and the doctrine of Assurance in particular, as the source of the demoralization; and

<sup>1</sup> K. von Raumer, as cited, pp. 32-37.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 42-52; Pusey, as cited, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, ii, 556-59, 622 sq., 728-29.

<sup>4</sup> See the extracts in Beard's *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 340-41.

<sup>5</sup> Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, Cap. 417.



at the Council of Trent it was expressly condemned. Thereafter, though it was "part and parcel of the Confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly," it was in the last-named conclave (1643) declared not to be of the essence of faith; and the Scottish General Assembly subsequently deposed and condemned holders of this, the original Protestant doctrine. Similar modifications took place elsewhere. Thus the Protestant world drifted back to a Catholic position, affirmed at the Council of Trent against Protestantism;<sup>1</sup> and in Holland we shall see, in the rise of Arminianism, a similar surrender on the Protestant side to the general pressure of Catholicism upon the ethical weaknesses of Predestinarianism. On that point, however, the original Catholic doctrine of predestination was revived by the Spanish Jesuit Luis Molina (1535-1600; not to be confused with the later Quietist, Miguel de Molinos), who in his treatise *Liberi Arbitrii concordia cum gratiæ donis* (1588) set it forth as consequent upon God's foreknowledge of man's free use of his will. As a result of the dispute between the Thomists and Molina's followers, known as the Molinists, the Pope in 1607 pronounced that the views of both sides were permissible—a course which had already been taken twenty years before with the controversy on predestination aroused by the doctrines of Michael Baius at the University of Louvain.<sup>2</sup> Thus the dissensions of Catholics in a manner kept in countenance the divided Protestants; but the old confidence of affirmation and formulation was inevitably sapped by the constant play of controversy; and from this Protestantism necessarily suffered most.

Intellectually, there was visible retrogression in the Protestant world. It is significant that throughout the sixteenth century most of the great scientific thinkers and the freethinkers with the strongest bent to new science lived in the Catholic world. Rabelais and Bruno were priests; Copernicus a lay canon; Galileo had never withdrawn from the Church which humiliated him; even Kepler returned to the Catholic environment after professing Protestantism. He was in fact excommunicated by the Tübingen Protestant authorities in 1612<sup>3</sup> for condemning the Lutheran doctrine that the body of Christ could be in several places at once. The immunity of such original spirits as Gilbert and Harriott from active molestation is to

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hamilton, *Discussions in Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, pp. 493-94, note.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim, Reid's ed. pp. 625-26. Such solutions were common in papal polity. *Id.* p. 767.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Schuster, *Johann Kepler und die grossen kirchlichen Streitfragen seiner Zeit*, 1888, p. 178 sq. It is noteworthy that Kepler's mother was sentenced for witchcraft, and saved by the influence of her son. *Johann Keppler's Leben und Werken nach neuerlich aufgefundenen MSS.*, von G. L. C. Freiherrn von Breitschwert, 1835, p. 97 sq.

be explained only by the fact that they lived in the as yet un-Puritanized atmosphere of Elizabethan England, before the age of Bibliolatry. It would seem as if the spirit of Scripturalism, invading the very centres of thought, were more fatal to original intellectual life than the more external interferences of Catholic sacerdotalism.<sup>1</sup> In the phrase of Arnold, Protestantism turned the key on the spirit, where Catholicism was normally content with an outward submission to its ceremonies, and only in the most backward countries, as Spain, destroyed entirely the atmosphere of free mental intercourse. It was after a long reaction that Bruno and Galileo were arraigned at Rome.

The clerical resistance to new science, broadly speaking, was more bitter in the Protestant world than in the Catholic; and it was merely the relative lack of restraining power in the former that made possible the later scientific progress. The history of Lutheranism upon this side is an intellectual infamy. At Wittemberg, during Luther's life, Reinhold did not dare to teach the Copernican astronomy; Rheticus had to leave the place in order to be free to speak; and in 1571 the subject was put in the hands of Peucer, who taught that the Copernican theory was absurd. Finally, the rector of the university, Hensel, wrote a text-book for schools, entitled *The Restored Mosaic System of the World*, showing with entire success that the new doctrine was unscriptural.<sup>2</sup> A little later the Lutheran superintendent, Pfeiffer, of Lubeck, published his *Pansophia Mosaica*, insisting on the literal truth of the entire Genesiac myth.<sup>3</sup> In the next century Calovius (1612-1686), who taught successively at Königsberg, Dantzic, and Wittemberg, maintained the same position, contending that the story of Joshua's staying the sun and moon refuted Copernicus.<sup>4</sup> When Pope Gregory XIII, following an impulse abnormal in his world, took the bold step of rectifying the Calendar (1584), the Protestants in Germany and Switzerland vehemently resisted the reform, and in some cities would not tolerate it,<sup>5</sup> thus refusing, on theological grounds, the one species of co-operation with Catholicism that lay open to them. And the anti-scientific attitude persisted for over a

<sup>1</sup> "There is much reason to believe that the fetters upon scientific thought were closer under the strict interpretation of Scripture by the early Protestants than they had been under the older church" (White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 212). Concerning the Protestant hostility to the Copernican system and to Kepler, see Schuster, as cited, pp. 87 sq., 191 sq.

<sup>2</sup> White, as cited, i, 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* i, 213.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> Menzel, Cap. 431; Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 1884, ii, 743. The cantons of Glarus, Outer Appenzell, St. Gall, and the Grisons formally rejected the Gregorian Calendar. *Id.* *ib.* Zschokke (*Des Schweizerlands Geschichte*, 9te Ausg. 1853, p. 179) implies that the Protestants in general ignored it. Ranke (*Hist. of the Popes*, Bohn tr. 1908, i, 337) mentions that "all Catholic nations took part in this reform."



century in Switzerland as in Scotland. At Geneva, J.-A. Turretin (1671-1737), writing after Kepler and Newton had done their work, laboriously repeated the demonstration of Calovius, and reaffirmed the positions of Calvin. So far as its ministers could avail, the Sacred Book was working the old effect.

### § 2. England

Freethought gained permanently as little in England as elsewhere in the process of substituting local tyranny for that of Rome. The secularizing effect of the Reformation, indeed, was even more marked there than elsewhere. What Wolsey had aimed at doing with moderation and without revolution was done after him with violence on motives of sheer plunder, and a multitude not only of monasteries but of churches were disendowed and destroyed. The monastic churches were often magnificent, and "when the monasteries were dissolved, divine service altogether ceased in ninety out of every hundred of these great churches, and the remaining ten were left.....without any provision whatever" for public worship.<sup>1</sup> All this must have had a secularizing effect, which was accentuated by the changes in ritual; and by the middle of the century it was common to treat both churches and clergy with utter irreverence, which indeed the latter often earned by their mode of life.<sup>2</sup> Riots in churches, especially in London, were common; there was in fact a habit of driving mules and horses through them;<sup>3</sup> and buying and selling and even gaming were often carried on. But with all this there was no intellectual enlightenment, and in high places there was no toleration. Under Henry VIII anti-Romanist heretics were put to death on the old Romanist principles. In 1532, again, was burned James Bainham, who not only rejected the specially Catholic dogmas, but affirmed the possible salvation of unbelievers.

Under the Protectorate which followed there was indeed much religious semi-rationalism, evidently of continental derivation, which is discussed in the theological literature of the time. Roger Hutchinson, writing about 1550, repeatedly speaks of contemporary "Sadducees and Libertines" who say (1) "that all spirits and angels are no substances, but inspirations, affections, and qualities"; (2) "that the devil is nothing but *nolitum*, or a filthy affection coming of the flesh"; (3) "that there is neither place of rest nor

<sup>1</sup> Blunt, *Ref. of the Church of England*, ed. 1892, ii, 76. Of the twenty-six cathedrals in the reign of Henry VIII, thirteen had been monastic churches, and these were "razed to the smallest possible dimensions as to number and endowments." *Id.* p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Strype's *Memorials of Cranmer*, ed. 1848, ii, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Blunt, i, 160-61.

pain after this life; that hell is nothing else but a tormenting and desperate conscience; and that a joyful, quiet, and merry conscience is heaven."

See *The Image of God, or Layman's Book*, 1550, ch. xxiv: Parker Society's rep. 1842, pp. 134, 138, 140. Cp. p. 79 and Sermon II, on The Lord's Supper (*id.* p. 247), as to "Julianites" who "do think mortal *corpo*, mortal *anima*." To the period 1550-60 is also assigned the undated work of John Veron, *A Frutefull Treatise of Predestination and of the Divine Providence of God, with an Apology of the same against the swynishe gruntinge of the Epicures and Atheystes of oure time*. There was evidently a good deal of new rationalism, which has been generally ignored in English historiography. Its foreign source is suggested by the use of the term "Libertines," which derives from France and Geneva. See below, p. 473. The above-cited tenets are, in fact, partly identical with those of the *libertins* denounced at Geneva by Calvin.

Such doctrine, which we shall find in vogue fifty years later, cannot have been printed, and probably can have been uttered only by men of good status, as well as culture; and even by them only because of the weakness of the State Church in its transition stage. Yet heresy went still further among some of the sects set up by the Anabaptist movement, which in England as in Germany involved some measure of Unitarianism. A letter of Hooper to Bullinger in 1549 tells of "libertines and wretches who are daring enough in their conventicles not only to deny that Christ is the Messiah and Saviour of the world, but also to call that blessed Seed a mischievous fellow and deceiver of the world."<sup>1</sup> This must have been said with locked doors, for much milder heresy was heavily punished, the worst penalties falling upon that which stood equally with orthodoxy on Biblical grounds.

In 1541, under Henry VIII, were burned three persons "because they denied transubstantiation, and had not received the sacrament at Easter." See the letter of Hilles to Bullinger, *Original Letters*, as cited, i, 200. The case of Jean Bouchier or Bocher, burned in 1550, is well known. It is worth noting that the common charge against Cranmer, of persuading the young king to sign her death warrant, is false, being one of the myths of Foxe. The warrant was passed by the whole Privy Council, Cranmer not being even present. See the Parker Society's reprint of Roger Hutchinson, 1842, introd. pp. ii-5. Hutchinson apparently approved; and it is significant of the clerical attitude of the time that he calls (*Image of*

<sup>1</sup> *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, Parker Society, 1846, i, 66.



*God*, ch. xxx, p. 201) for the punishment of Anabaptists by death if necessary, but does *not* suggest it for "Sadducees and Libertines."

The Elizabethan archbishops and the Puritans were equally intolerant; and the idea of free inquiry was undreamt of. That there had been much private discussion in clerical circles, however, is plain from the 13th and 18th of the Thirty-nine Articles (1562), which repudiate natural morality and hold "accursed" those who say that men can be saved under any creed.<sup>1</sup> This fulmination would not have occurred had the heresy not been pressing; but the "curse" would thenceforth set the key of clerical and public utterance. The Reformation, in fact, speedily over-clouded with fanaticism what new light of freethought had been glimmering before; turning into Bibliolaters those who had rationally doubted some of the Catholic mysteries, and forcing back, either into silence or, by reaction, into Catholic bigotry, those more refined spirits who, like Sir Thomas More, had before been really in advance of their age intellectually and morally, and desired a transmutation of the old system rather than its overthrow. Nothing so nearly rational as the *Utopia* (1515-16) appeared again in English literature for a century; it is indeed, in some respects, a lead to social science in our own day. More, with all his spontaneous turn for pietism, had evidently drunk in his youth or prime<sup>2</sup> at some freethinking source, for his book recognizes the existence of unbelievers in deity and immortality; and though he pronounces them unfit for political power, as did Milton, Locke, and Voltaire long after him, he stipulates that they be tolerated.<sup>3</sup> Broadly speaking, the book is simply deistic. "From a world," says a popular historian, clerically trained—"from a world where fifteen hundred years of Christian teaching had produced social injustice, religious intolerance, and political tyranny, the humorist philosopher turns to a 'Nowhere' in which the efforts of mere natural human virtue realized those ends of security, equality, brotherhood, and freedom, for which the very institution of society seems to have been framed."<sup>4</sup> In his own case, however, we see the Nemesis of the sway of feeling over

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Burnet (*Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. 18) has given currency to the pretence that the words "saved by the law" are meant to exclude the sense "saved in the law," the latter salvation being allowed as possible. That there was no such thought on the part of the framers of the Article is shown by the Latin version, where the expression is precisely "*in lege*." Burnet prints the Latin, yet utterly ignores its significance.

<sup>2</sup> Book II of the *Utopia* was written at Antwerp, during his six months' stay there on an embassy.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. ii, sec. "Of the Religions" (Arber's ed. pp. 143-47; Morley's ed. pp. 151-53).

<sup>4</sup> Green, *Short History*, ch. vi, § 4; 1881 ed. p. 311. Compare Green's whole estimate. Michelet's hostile criticism (x, 356) is surprisingly inept. For the elements of naturalism in the *Utopia* see bk. ii, sections "Of their Journeying" and "Of the Religions."

judgment, for, beginning by keeping his prejudice above the reason of whose teaching he is conscious, he ends by becoming a blind religious polemist and a bitter persecutor.

Cp. Isaac Disraeli's essay, "The Psychological Character of Sir Thomas More," in the *Amenities of Literature*, and the present writer's essay, "Culture and Reaction," in *Essays in Sociology*, vol. i. Lord Acton, vindicating More as against Wolsey, pleads (*Histor. Essays and Studies*, 1907, p. 64) that More before his death protested that no Protestant perished by his act. This seems to be true in the bare sense that he did not exceed his ostensible legal duties, and several times restrained the execution of the law (Archdeacon Hutton, *Sir Thomas More*, 1895, pp. 215-22). But the fact remains that More expressly justified and advocated the burning of heretics as "lawful, necessary, and well done." Title of ch. xiii of Dialogue, *The Supper of the Lord*. Cp. title of ch. xv.

It is in the wake, then, of the overthrow of Catholicism in the second generation that a far-reaching freethought begins to be heard of in England; and this clearly comes by way of new continental and literary contact, which would have occurred in at least as great a degree under Catholicism, save insofar as unbelief was facilitated by the irreverence developed by the ecclesiastical revolution, or by the state of indifference which among the upper classes was the natural sequel of the shameless policy of plunder and the oscillation between Protestant and Catholic forms. And it was finally in such negative ways only that Protestantism furthered freethought anywhere.

### § 3. The Netherlands

Hardly more fortunate was the earlier course of things intellectual after the Reformation in the Netherlands, where by the fifteenth century remarkable progress had been made alike in science and the arts, and where Erasmus acquired his culture and did his service to culture's cause. The fact that Protestantism had to fight for its life against Philip was of course not the fault of the Protestants; and to that ruinous struggle is to be attributed the arrest of the civilization of Flanders. But it lay in the nature of the Protestant impulse that, apart from the classical culture which in Holland was virtually a successful industry, providing editions for all Europe, it should turn all intellectual life for generations into vain controversy. The struggle between reform and popery was followed by the struggle between Calvinism and Arminianism; and



the second was no less bitter if less bloody than the first,<sup>1</sup> the religious strife passing into civil feud.

The secret of the special bitterness of Calvinist resentment towards the school of Arminius lay in the fact that the latter endorsed some of the most galling of the Catholic criticisms of Calvinism. ARMINIUS [Latinized name of Jacob Harmensen or van Harmin, 1560-1609, professor of theology at Leyden] was personally a man of great amiability, averse to controversy, but unable to reconcile the Calvinist view of predestination with his own quasi-rational ethic, and concerned to secure that the dogma should not be fastened upon all Dutch Protestants. In his opinion, no effective answer could be made on Calvinist lines to the argument of Cardinal Bellarmine<sup>2</sup> that from much Calvinist doctrine there flowed the consequences: "God is the author of sin; God really sins; God is the only sinner; sin is no sin at all."<sup>3</sup> This was substantially true; and Arminius, like Bellarmine, unable to see that the Calvinist position was simply a logical reduction to moral absurdity of all theistic ethic, sought safety in fresh dogmatic modifications. Of these the Calvinists, in turn, could easily demonstrate the logical incoherence; and in a ring of dilemmas from which there was no logical exit save into Naturalism there arose an exacerbated strife, as of men jostling each other in a prison where some saw their nominal friends in partial sympathy with their deadly enemies, who jeered at their divisions.

The wonder is that the chaos of dispute and dogmatic tinkering which followed did not more rapidly disintegrate faith. Calvinists sought modifications under stress of dialectic, like their predecessors; and the high "Supralapsarian" doctrine—the theory of the certain regeneration or "perseverance" of "the saints"—shaded into "the Creabibitarian opinion"<sup>4</sup> and yet another; while the "Sublapsarian" view claimed also to safeguard predestination. So long as men remained in the primary Protestant temper, convinced that they possessed in their Bibles an infallible revelation, such strife could but generate new passion, even as it had done on the other irrational problem of the eucharist. For men of sane and peaceful disposition, the only modes of peace were resignation and doubt; and in the case of the doubters the first intellectual movements would be either

<sup>1</sup> Cp. T. C. Grattan, *The Netherlands*, 1830, pp. 231-43.

<sup>2</sup> Who, as it happened, avowed that "religion was almost extinct" in Europe at the time of the rise of the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies. Concilio xxviii. *Opera*, vi, 296, ed. 1617, cited by Blunt, *Ref. of Church of England*, ed. 1892, i, 4, note.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. *The Works of Arminius*, ed. by James Nichols, 1825, i, 580, note.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 581 note.

back towards Rome<sup>1</sup> or further on towards deism. The former course would be taken by some who had winced under the jeers of the Catholics; the latter by the hardier spirits who judged Catholicism for themselves. As most of the fighting had been primed by and transacted over texts, the surrender of the belief in an inspired scripture greatly reduced the friction; and in Holland as elsewhere deism would be thus spontaneously generated in the Protestant atmosphere. A few went even further. "I have no doubt that many persons have secretly revolted from the Reformed Church to the Papists," wrote Uitenbogaert to Vorstius in 1613. "I firmly believe," he added, "that Atheism is creeping by degrees into the minds of some."<sup>2</sup>

Where mere Arminianism could bring Barneveldt to the block, even deism could not be avowed; and generations had to pass before it could have the semblance of a party; but the proof of the new vogue of unbelief lies in the labour spent by Grotius (Hugo or Huig van Groot, 1583-1645) on his treatise *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ* (1627)—a learned and strenuous defence of the faith which had so lacerated his fatherland, first through the long struggle with Spain, and again in the feud of Arminians and Calvinists. When Barneveldt was put to death, Grotius had been sentenced to imprisonment for life; and it was only after three years of the dungeon that, by the famous stratagem of his wife, he escaped in 1621. The fact that he devoted his freedom in France first to his great treatise *On the Law of War and Peace* (1625), seeking to humanize the civil life of the world, and next to his defence of the Christian religion, is the proof of his magnanimity; but the spectacle of his life must have done as much to set thinkers against the whole creed as his apologetic did to reconcile them to it. He, the most distinguished Dutch scholar and the chief apologist of Christianity in his day, had to seek refuge, on his escape from prison, in Catholic France, whose king granted him a pension. The circumstance which in Holland chiefly favoured freethought, the freedom of the press, was, like the great florescence of the arts in the seventeenth century, a result of the whole social and political conditions, not of any Protestant belief in free discussion. That there were freethinkers in Holland in and before Grotius's time is implied in the pains he took to defend Christianity; but that they existed in despite and not by grace of the ruling Protestantism is proved by the fact that they did not venture to publish their opinions. In

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Schuster, as cited, pp. 191 sq., 202 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Nichols's *Arminius*, i, p. 233.



France, doubtless, he found as much unbelief as he had left behind. In the end, Grotius and Casaubon alike recoiled from the narrow Protestantism around them, which had so sadly failed to realize their hopes.<sup>1</sup> "In 1642 Grotius had become wholly averse to the Reformation. He thought it had done more harm than good"; and had he lived a few years longer he would probably have become a Catholic.<sup>2</sup>

#### § 4. Conclusion

Thus concerning the Reformation generally "we are obliged to confess that, especially in Germany, it soon parted company with free learning; that it turned its back upon culture; that it lost itself in a maze of arid theological controversy; that it held out no hand of welcome to awakening science. Presently we shall see that the impulse to an enlightened study and criticism of the Scriptures came chiefly from heretical quarters; that the unbelieving Spinoza and the Arminian Le Clerc pointed the way to investigations which the great Protestant systematizers thought neither necessary nor useful. Even at a later time it has been the divines who have most loudly declared their allegiance to the theology of the Reformation who have also looked most askance at science, and claimed for their statements an entire independence of modern knowledge."<sup>3</sup> In fine, "to look at the Reformation by itself, to judge it only by its theological and ecclesiastical development, is to pronounce it a failure"; and the claim that "to consider it as part of a general movement of European thought.....is at once to vindicate its past and to promise it the future"—this amounts merely to avowing the same thing. Only as an eddy in the movement of freethought is the Reformation intellectually significant. Politically it is a great illustration of the potency of economic forces.

While, however, the Reformation in itself thus did little for the spirit of freethought, substituting as it did the arbitrary standard of "revelation" for the not more arbitrary standard of papal authority, it set up outside its own sphere some new movements of rational doubt which must have counted for much in the succeeding period. It was not merely that, as we shall see, the bloody strifes of the two Churches, and the quarrels of the Protestant sects among themselves, sickened many thoughtful men of the whole subject of theology; but that the disputes between Romanists and anti-Romanists raised

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 406-416; Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 2nd ed. pp. 447-48. As to Casaubon's own intolerance, however, see p. 446.  
<sup>2</sup> Hallam, ii, 411, 416.  
<sup>3</sup> Beard, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 298.

difficult questions as to the bases of all kinds of belief. As always happens when established beliefs are long attacked, the subtler spirits in the conservative interest after a time begin putting in doubt beliefs of every species; a method often successful with those who cannot carry an argument to its logical conclusions, and who are thus led to seek harbour in whatever credence is on the whole most convenient; but one which puts stronger spirits on the reconsideration of all their opinions. Thus we shall find, not only in the skepticism of Montaigne, which is historically a product of the wars of religion in France, but in the more systematic and more cautious argumentation of the abler Protestants of the seventeenth century, a measure of general rationalism much more favourable alike to natural science and to Biblical and ethical criticism than had been the older environment of authority and tradition, brutal sacerdotalism, and idolatrous faith. Men continued to hate each other religiously for trifles, to quarrel over gestures and vestures, and to wrangle endlessly over worn-out dogmas; but withal new and vital heresies were set on foot; new science generated new doubt; and under the shadow of the aging tree of theology there began to appear the growths of a new era. As Protestantism had come outside the "universal" Church, rearing its own tabernacles, so freethought came outside both, scanning with a deepened intentness the universe of things. And thus began a more vital innovation than that dividing the Reformation from the Renaissance, or even that dividing the Renaissance from the Middle Ages.



## CHAPTER XIII

## THE RISE OF MODERN FREETHOUGHT

§ 1. *The Italian Influence*

THE negative bearing of the Reformation on freethought is made clear by the historic fact that the new currents of thought which broadly mark the beginning of the "modern spirit" arose in its despite, and derive originally from outside its sphere. It is to Italy, where the political and social conditions thus far tended to frustrate the Inquisition, that we trace the rise alike of modern deism, modern Unitarianism, modern pantheism, modern physics, and the tendency to rational atheism. The deistic way of thinking, of course, prevailed long before it got that name; and besides the vogue of Averroism we have noted the virtual deism of More's *Utopia* (1516). The first explicit mention of deism noted by Bayle, however, is in the epistle dedicatory to the second and expanded edition of the *Instruction Chrétienne* of the Swiss Protestant Viret (1563), where professed deists are spoken of as a new species bearing a new name. On the admission of Viret, who was the friend and bitter disciple of Calvin, they rejected all revealed religion, but called themselves deists by way of repudiating atheism; some keeping a belief in immortality, some rejecting it. In the theological manner he goes on to call them all execrable atheists, and to say that he has added to his treatise on their account an exposition of natural religion grounded on the "Book of Nature"; stultifying himself by going on to say that he has also dealt with the professed atheists.<sup>1</sup> Of the deists he admits that among them were men of the highest repute for science and learning. Thus within ten years of the burning of Servetus we find privately avowed deism and atheism in the area of French-speaking Protestantism.

Doubtless the spectacle of Protestant feuds and methods would go far to foster such unbelief; but though, as we have seen, there were aggressive Unitarians in Germany before 1530, who, being scholars, may or may not have drawn on Italian thought, thereafter there is reason to look to Italy as the source of the propaganda.

<sup>1</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. VIRET, note D.

Thence came the two Sozzini, the founders of Socinianism, of whom Lelio, the uncle of Fausto, travelled much in northern Europe (including England) between 1546 and 1552.<sup>1</sup> As the earlier doctrine of Servetus shows clear affinities to that of the Sozzini, and his earlier books were much read in Italy between 1532 and 1540, he may well have given them their impulse.<sup>2</sup> It is evidently to Servetus that Zanchi referred when he wrote to Bullinger in 1565 that "Spain bore the hens, Italy hatched the eggs, and we now hear the chickens piping."<sup>3</sup> Before Socinianism had taken form it was led up to, as we have seen, in the later writings of the ex-monk Bernardino Ochino (1487-1564), who, in the closing years of a much chequered career, combined mystical and Unitarian tendencies with a leaning to polygamy and freedom of divorce.<sup>4</sup> His influence was considerable among the Swiss Protestants, though they finally expelled him for his heresies. From Geneva or from France, in turn, apparently came some of the English freethought of the middle period of the sixteenth century;<sup>5</sup> for in 1562 Speaker Williams in the House of Commons, in a list of misbelievers, speaks of "Pelagians, Libertines, Papists, and such others, leaving God's commandments to follow their own traditions, affections, and minds"<sup>6</sup>—using theologically the foreign term, which never became naturalized in English in its foreign sense. It was about the year 1563, again, that Roger Ascham wrote his *Scholemaster*, wherein are angrily described, as a species new in England, men who, "where they dare," scorn both Protestant and Papist, "rejecting scripture, and counting the Christian mysteries as fables."<sup>7</sup> He describes them as "ἀθεοι in doctrine"; adding, "this last word is no more unknowne now to plane Englishe men than the Person was unknown somtyme in England, untill some Englishe man took peines to fetch that develish opinion out of Italie."<sup>8</sup> The whole tendency he connects in a general way with the issue of many new translations from the Italian, mentioning in particular Petrarch and Boccaccio.

<sup>1</sup> Calvin, scenting his heresy, warned him in 1552 (Bayle, art. MARIANUS SOCIN, the first, note B); but they remained on surprisingly good terms till Lelio's death in 1562. Cp. Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, ii, 321-28.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the English *History of Servetus*, 1724, p. 39, and Trechsel, *Lelio Sozzini und die Antitrinitarier seiner Zeit* (Bd. ii. of *Die protestantischen Antitrinitarier*, 1844, pp. 38-41.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by Trechsel, p. 42, note.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Bayle, art. OCHIN; Miss Lowndes, *Michel de Montaigne*, p. 266; Owen, *French Skeptics*, p. 588; Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino of Siena*, Eng. tr. 1876, pp. 268-72. McCrie mentions (*Ref. in Italy*, p. 228, note) that Ochino's dialogue on polygamy has been translated and published in England "by the friends of that practice." (In 1657. Rep. 1732.)

<sup>5</sup> Above, pp. 458-59, Sermons (orthodox) by Ochino were published in English in 1548, and often reprinted.

<sup>6</sup> D'Ewes, *Journals of Parliament in the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1682, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 459.

<sup>8</sup> *The Scholemaster*, Arber's rep. p. 82.



Among good Protestants his view was general; and so Lord Burghley in his *Advice to his Son* writes: "Suffer not thy sons to pass the Alps, for they shall learn nothing there but pride, blasphemy, and atheism." As it happened, his grandson the second Earl of Exeter, and his great-grandson Lord Roos, went to Rome, and became not atheists but Roman Catholics.

Such episodes should remind us that in that age of ignorance and superstition the Church had always an immense advantage. Those who, like Gentillet in his raging *Discours*, commonly known as the *Contre-Machiavel* (1576), ascribed to "atheism" and the teaching of Machiavelli all the crimes and oppressions wrought by Catholics,<sup>1</sup> were ludicrously perverting the facts. Massacres in churches, which are cited by Gentillet as impossible to believing Catholics, were wrought, as we have seen, on the largest scale by the Church in the thirteenth century. So, when Scaliger calls the Italians of his day "a set of atheists," we are to understand it rather of "the hypocrisy than of the professed skepticism of the time."<sup>2</sup> But rationalism and semi-rationalism did prevail in Italy more than in any other country.<sup>3</sup>

Like the old Averroism, the new pietistic Unitarianism persisted in Italy and radiated thence afresh when it had flagged in other lands. The exploded Unitarian tradition<sup>4</sup> runs that the doctrine arose in the year 1546 among a group of more than forty learned men who were wont to assemble in secret at Vicenza, near Venice. Claudius of Savoy, however, emphatically gave out his anti-Trinitarian doctrine at Berne in 1534, after having been imprisoned at Strasburg and banished thence;<sup>5</sup> and Ochino and Lelio Sozzini left Italy in 1543. But there seems to have been a continuous evolution of Unitarian heresy in the south after the German movement had ceased. Giorgio Biandrata, whom we have seen flying to Poland from Geneva, had been seized by the Inquisition at Pavia for such opinion. Still it persisted. In 1562 Giulio Guirlando of Treviso, and in 1566 Francesco Saga of Rovigo, were burned at Venice for anti-Trinitarianism. Giacomo Aconzio too, who dedicated his *Stratagems of Satan* (Basel, 1565) to Queen Elizabeth, and who

<sup>1</sup> E.g., work cited, pt. ii, Max. 1, and Max. 6, end. Eng. tr. 1608, pp. 93, 128.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Pattison, Essay on Joseph Scaliger, in *Essays*, Routledge's ed. i, 114.

<sup>3</sup> When Pattison declares that Italian curiosity had bred "not secret unbelief but callous acquiescence" he sets up a spurious antithesis; and when he generalizes that in Italy "men did not disbelieve the truths of the Christian religion," he understates the case. He errs equally in the opposite direction when he alleges (ib. p. 141) that in the France of Montaigne "a philosophical skepticism had become the creed of all thinking men." Such a difference between France and Italy was impossible.

<sup>4</sup> See McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, pp. 96-99.

<sup>5</sup> Trechsel, *Die Protestantischen Antitrinitarier vor Faustus Socinus*, i (1839), 56; Mosheim, 16 Cent. 3rd sec. pt. ii, ch. iv, § 3.

pleaded notably for the toleration of heresy,<sup>1</sup> was a decided latitudinarian.<sup>2</sup>

It is remarkable that the whole ferment occurs in the period of the Catholic Reaction, the Council of Trent, and the subjection of Italy, when the papacy was making its great effort to recover its ground. It would seem that in the compulsory peace which had now fallen on Italian life men's thoughts turned more than ever to mental problems, as had happened in Greece after the rise of Alexander's empire. The authority of the Church was outwardly supreme; the Jesuits had already begun to do great things for education;<sup>3</sup> the revived Inquisition was everywhere in Italy; its prisons, as we have seen, were crowded with victims of all grades during a whole generation; Pius V and the hierarchy everywhere sought to enforce decorum in life; the "pagan" academies formed on the Florentine model were dissolved; and classic culture rapidly decayed with the arts, while clerical learning flourished,<sup>4</sup> and a new religious music began with Palestrina. Yet on the death of Paul IV the Roman populace burned the Office of the Inquisition to the ground and cast the pope's statue into the Tiber;<sup>5</sup> and in that age (1548) was born Giordano Bruno, one of the types of modern freethought.

The great service of Italy to modern freethought, however, was to come later, in respect of the impulse given to the scientific spirit by Bruno, Vanini, and Galileo. On the philosophical or critical side, the Italy of the middle of the sixteenth century left no enduring mark on European thought, though her serious writers were numerous. Aconzio had published, before his *De Stratagematibus Satanae*, a treatise *De Methodo, sive recta investigandarum tradendarumque scientiarum ratione* (Basel, 1558), wherein he pleads strenuously for a true logical method as the one way to real knowledge of things. In this he anticipates Bacon, as did, still earlier, Mario Nizolio in his *Antibarbarus sive de veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudo-philosophos* (Parma, 1553). Nizolio's main effort is towards the discrediting of Aristotle, whom, like so many in the

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Art. ACONZIO, in *Dict. of National Biog.* Cp. J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, 2nd ed. pp. 205-206. As to the attack on latitudinarianism in the Thirty-nine Articles, see above, p. 460.

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, *Adv. of Learning*, bk. i; *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7 (Routledge ed. pp. 50, 63, 209).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Zeller, *Hist. de l'Italie*, pp. 400-12; Green, *Short Hist.*, ch. viii, § 2.

<sup>5</sup> McCrie, p. 164. It was said by Scaliger that "in the time of Pius IV [between Paul IV and Pius V] people talked very freely in Rome." *Id. ib.* note. "It was even considered characteristic of good society in Rome to call the principles of Christianity in question. 'One passes,' says P. Ant. Bandino, 'no longer for a man of cultivation unless one put forth heterodox opinions concerning the Christian faith.'" Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Bohn, tr. ed. 1908, i, 58, citing Caracciolo's MS. Life of Paul IV.



generation following, he regarded as the great bulwark of scholastic obscurantism. He insists that all knowledge must proceed from sensation, which alone has immediate certainty; and thus stands for direct scientific observation as against tradition and verbalism. But Ludovicus Vives had before him (in his *De causis corruptarum artium*, Antwerp, 1531) claimed that the true Aristotelian went direct to nature, as Aristotle himself had done; and Nizolio did nothing in practical science to substantiate his polemic against the logic-choppers.

He and Aconzio in effect cancel each other. Each had glimpsed a truth, one seeing the need for a right method in inference, the other protesting against the idea that abstract reasoning could lead to knowledge; but neither made good his argument by any treasure trove of fact. Another writer of the same decade, Gomez Pereira, joined in the revolt against Aristotelianism, publishing in 1554 his *Margarita Antoniana*, wherein, in advance of Descartes, he maintained the absence of sensation in brutes.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, he championed freedom in speculation, denying that authority should avail save in matters of faith. But he too failed to bring forth fruits meet for freedom. Neither by abstract exposition of right methods of reasoning, nor by abstract attacks on wrong methods, could any vital impulse yet be given to thought. What was lacking was the use of reason upon actual problems, whether of human or of natural science. All the while Europe was anchored to ancient delusion, historical and scientific. Even as the horrors of age-long religious war could alone drive men to something like toleration in the religious life, there was needed the impact of actual discovery to win them to science as against scholasticism. And rational thinking on the religion which resisted all new science was to be still later of attainment, save for the nameless men who throughout the ages of faith rejected the creeds without publishing their unbelief. Of these Italy had always a large sprinkling.

### § 2. Spain

The fact that sixteenth-century Spain could be charged, on the score of Servetus, with producing the "hen" of Socinianism, is an important reminder of the perpetuity of variation and of the fatality of environment. The Portuguese Sanchez, whom we shall find laying new potential foundations of skepticism in France alongside of Montaigne, could neither have acquired nor propounded his

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, ii, 116.

philosophy in his native land. But it is to be noted that an elder contemporary of Sanchez, living and dying in Spain, was able, in the generation after Servetus, to make a real contribution to the revival of freethought, albeit under shelter of a firm profession of orthodoxy.

No book of the kind, perhaps, had a wider European popularity than the *Examen de Ingenios para las ciencias* of HUARTE de San Juan, otherwise Juan Huarte y Navarro (c. 1530-1592). Like Servetus and Sanchez and many another, Huarte had his bias to reason fostered by a medical training; and it is as a "natural philosopher" that he stands for a rational study of causation. As a pioneer of exact science, indeed, he counts for next to nothing. Taking as his special theme the divergences of human faculty, he does but found himself on the *à priori* system of "humours" and "temperatures" passed on by Aristotle to Galen and Hippocrates, inconsistently affirming on the one hand that the "characters" not only of whole nations but of the inhabitants of provinces are determined by their special climates and aliments, and on the other hand that individual faculty is determined by the proportions of hot and cold, moist and dry "temperatures" in the parents. Apart from his insistence on the functions of the brain, and from broadly rational deliverances as to the kinds of faculty which determine success in theology and law, arms and arts, his "science" is naught. Dealing with an obscure problem, he brought to it none of the exact inductiveness which alone had yielded true knowledge in the simpler field of astronomy. In virtue, however, either of his confidence in affirmation or of his stand for rational inquiry, or of both, Huarte's book, published in 1575, went the round of Europe. Translated into Italian in 1582 (or earlier; new rendering 1600), it was thence rendered into English by Richard Carew in 1594.<sup>1</sup> A French version appeared in 1598, and two others in 1661 and 1671. A later English translation, from the original, was produced in 1698; and Lessing thought the book worth putting into German in 1785.

The rationalistic importance of Huarte lies in his insistence on the study of "second causes" and his protest against the burking of all inquiry by a reference to deity. On this head he anticipates much of the polemic of Bacon. The explanation of all processes and phenomena by the will of God, he observes, "is so ancient a manner of talk, and the natural philosophers have so often refuted it, that

<sup>1</sup> Under the alternative titles of *The Examination of Men's Wits* and *A Trial of Wits*. Rep. 1596, 1604, 1616.



the seeking to take the same away were superfluous, neither is it convenient.....But I have often gone about to consider the reason and the cause whence it may grow that the vulgar sort is so great friend to impute all things to God, and to reave them from Nature, and do so abhor the natural means."<sup>1</sup> His solution is the impatience of men over the complexity of Nature, their spiritual arrogance, their indolence, and their piety. For himself, he pronounces, as Middleton did in England nearly two centuries later, that "God doth no longer those unwonted things of the New Testament; and the reason is, for that on his behalf he hath performed all necessary diligence that men might not pretend ignorance. And to think that he will begin anew to do the like miracles.....is an error very great.....God speaks once (saith Job) and turns not to a second replial."<sup>2</sup>

Only thus could the principle of natural causation be affirmed in the Spain of Philip II. Huarte is careful to affirm miracles while denying their recurrence; and throughout he writes as a good Scripturist and Catholic. But he sticks to his naturalist thesis that "Nature makes able," and avows that "natural philosophers laugh at such as say, This is God's doing, without assigning the order and discourse of the particular causes whence they may spring."<sup>3</sup> The fact that the book was dedicated to Philip tells of royal protection, without which the author could hardly have escaped the Inquisition. Years after, we shall find Lilly in England protesting on the stage against the conception of *Natura naturans*; and Bacon powerfully reaffirming Huarte's doctrine, with the same reservations. The Spaniard must have counted for something as a pleader for elementary reason, if Bacon did.

But this is practically the only important contribution from Spain to the intellectual renaissance then going on in Europe. As we have seen, it was not that Spaniards had any primordial bias to dogmatism and persecution: it was simply that their whole sociopolitical evolution, largely determined by Spanish discovery and dominion in the New World, set up institutions and forces which became specially powerful to stamp out freethought. The work of progress was done in lands where lack of external dominion left on the one hand a greater fund of variant energy, and on the other made for a lesser power of repression on the part of Church and State.

<sup>1</sup> Carew's tr. ed. 1596, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 19.

### § 3. France

While Italy continues to be reputed throughout the sixteenth century a hotbed of freethinking, styled "atheism," it appears to have been in France, alongside of the wars of religion, that positive unbelief, as distinct from scripturalist Unitarianism, made most new headway among laymen. It was in France that the forces of change had greatest play. The mere contact with Italy which began with the invasion of Charles VII in 1494 meant a manifold moral and mental influence, affecting French literature and life alike; and the age of strife and destruction which set in with the first Huguenot wars could not but be one of disillusionment for multitudes of serious men. We have seen as much in the work of Bonaventure des Periers and Rabelais; but the spread of radical unbelief is to be traced, as is usual in the ages of faith, by the books written against it. Already in 1552 we have seen Guillaume Postell publishing his book, *Contra Atheos*.<sup>1</sup> Unbelief increasing, there is published in 1564 an *Atheomachie* by one De Bourgeville; but the Massacre must have gone far to frustrate him. In 1581 appears another *Atheomachie, ou réfutation des erreurs et impiétés des Athéistes, Libertins, etc.*, issued at Geneva, but bearing much on French life; and in the same year is issued the long-time popular work of the Huguenot Philippe de Mornay, *De la verité de la religion Chrestienne, Contre les Athées, Epicuriens, Payens, Juifs, Mahumédistes, et autres Infidèles*.<sup>2</sup> In both the Epistle Dedicatory (to Henry of Navarre) and the Preface the author speaks of the great multiplication of unbelief, the refutation of which he declares to be more needful among Christians than it ever had been among the heathen. But, like most of the writers against atheism in that age, he declares<sup>3</sup> that there are no atheists save a few young fools and utterly bad men, who turn to God as soon as they fall sick. The reputed atheists of antiquity are vindicated as having denied not the principle of deity but the false Gods of their age—this after the universality of a belief in Gods in all ages had been cited as one of the primary proofs of God's existence. In this fashion is compiled a book of nine hundred pages, ostensibly for the confutation of a few fools and knaves, described as unworthy of serious consideration.

<sup>1</sup> According to Henri Estienne, Postell himself vended strange heresies, one being to the effect that to make a good religion there were needed three—the Christian, the Jewish, and the Turkish. *Apologie pour Herodote*, liv. i, ed. 1607, pp. 98-100.

<sup>2</sup> Published at Antwerp. It was reprinted in 1582, 1583, and 1590; translated into Latin in 1583, and frequently reprinted in that form; translated into English (begun by Sir Philip Sidney and completed by Arthur Golding) in 1587, and in that form at least thrice reprinted in blackletter.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. 1582, p. 18. Eng. tr. 1604, p. 10.



Evidently the unbelief of de Mornay's day was a more vigorous growth than he affected to think; and his voluminous performance was followed by others. In 1586, Christophe Cheffontaines published his *Epitome novæ illustrationis Christianae Fidei adversus Impios, Libertinos et Atheos*; and still skepticism gained ground, having found new abettors.

First came the Portuguese Francisco Sanchez (1552-1623?), born in Portugal, but brought as a child to Bordeaux, which seems to have been a place of refuge for many fugitive heretics from both sides of the Peninsula. Sanchez has recorded that in his early youth he had no bias to incredulity of any kind; but at some stage of his adolescence he travelled in Italy and spent some time at Rome. The result was not that special disbelief in Christianity which was proverbially apt to follow, but a development on his part of philosophic skepticism properly so-called, which found expression in a Latin treatise entitled *Quod Nihil Scitur*—"That Nothing is Known." Composed as early as 1576, in the author's twenty-fourth year, the book was not published till 1581, a year after the first issue of the *Essais* of Montaigne. It is natural to surmise that while Sanchez was at Bordeaux he may have known something of his famous contemporary; but though Montaigne is likely to have read the *Quod Nihil Scitur* in due course, he nowhere speaks of it; and in 1576 Sanchez was a Professor of Medicine at Montpellier, then a town of Huguenot leanings. Soon he left it for Toulouse, the hotbed of Catholic fanaticism, where he contrived to live out his long life in peace, despite his production of a Pyrrhonist treatise and of a remarkable Latin poem (1578) on the comet of 1577. The *Quod Nihil Scitur* is a skeptical flank attack on current science, in no way animadverting on religion, as to which he professed orthodoxy: the poem is a frontal attack on the whole creed of astrology, then commonly held by Averroists and Aristotelians, as well as by orthodox Catholics. Yet he seems never to have been molested. It would seem as if a skepticism which ostensibly disallowed all claims to "natural" knowledge, while avowedly recognizing "spiritual," was then as later thought to make rather for faith than against it. That such virtual Pyrrhonism as that of Sanchez can ever have ministered to religious zeal is not indeed to be supposed: it is rather as a weapon against the confidence of the "Naturalist" that the skeptical method has always recommended itself to the calculating priest. And inasmuch as astrology could be, and was, held by a non-religious theory, though many Christians added it to their creed, a polemic against that was the least dangerous form of

rationalizing then possible. At all times there had been priests who so reasoned, though, as we have seen in dealing with the men of the Protestant Reformation, the belief in astral influences is too closely akin to the main line of religious tradition to be capable of ejection on religious grounds.

With his hostility to credulous hopes and fears in the sphere of Nature, Sanchez is naturally regarded as a forerunner and helper of freethought. But there is nothing to show that his work had any effect in undermining the most formidable of all the false beliefs of Christendom.<sup>1</sup> Like so many others of his age, he flouted Aristotelean scholasticism, but was perforce silent as to the verbalisms and sophistries of simple theology. It may fairly be inferred that his poem on the comet of 1577 helped to create that current of reasoned disbelief<sup>2</sup> which we find throwing up almost identical expressions in Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Molière,<sup>3</sup> concerning the folly of connecting the stars with human affairs. But a skepticism which left untouched the main matter of the creeds could not affect conduct in general; and while Sanchez passed unchecked the watchdogs of the Inquisition, the fiery Bruno and Vanini were in his day to meet their fiery death at its hands—the latter in Toulouse, perhaps under the eyes of Sanchez. Having resigned his professorship of medicine, he seems to have lived to a ripe age, dying in 1623.

Probably those very deaths availed more for the rousing of critical thought than did the dialectic of the Pyrrhonist. To the life of the reason may with perfect accuracy be applied the claim so often made for that of religion—that it feeds on feeling and is rooted in experience. Revolt from the cruelties and follies of faith plays a great part in the history of freethought. In the greatest French writer of that age, a professed Catholic, but in mature life averse alike to Catholic and to Protestant bigotry, the shock of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew can be seen disintegrating once for all the spirit of faith. MONTAIGNE typifies the kind of skepticism produced in an unscientific age by the practical demonstration that religion can avail immeasurably more for evil than for good.<sup>4</sup> A few years before the Massacre he had translated for his dying father<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Or even in modifying philosophic doctrine, save perhaps as regards Descartes, later. Cp. Bartholmess, *Hist. crit. des doct. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i, 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> See Owen, *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, pp. 631-36—a fairer and more careful estimate than that of Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 111-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Essais*, bk. ii, ch. xiii, ed. Firmin-Didot, vol. ii, 2-3; *King Lear*, i, 2, near end; *Les Amants Magnifiques*, i, 2; iii, 1. Montaigne echoes Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* ii, 8), as Molière does Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii, 43.

<sup>4</sup> "Our religion," he writes, "is made to extirpate vices; it protects, nourishes, and incites them" (*Essais*, liv, ii, ch. xii; éd. Firmin-Didot, ii, 464). "There is no enmity so extreme as the Christian." (I quote in general Florio's translation for the flavour's sake; but it should be noted that he makes many small slips.)

<sup>5</sup> Owen was mistaken (*Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, p. 414) in supposing that



the old *Theologia Naturalis* of Raymond of Sebonde; and we know from the later *Apology* in the *Essays* that freethinking contemporaries declared the argument of Raymond to be wholly insufficient.<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the same essay that Montaigne felt as much; though the gist of his polemic is a vehement attack upon all forms of confident opinion, religious and anti-religious alike. "In replying to arguments of so opposite a tenour, Montaigne leaves Christianity, as well as Raimond Sebonde, without a leg to stand upon. He demolishes the arguments of Sebonde with the rest of human presumption, and allows Christianity, neither held by faith nor provable by reason, to fall between the two stools."<sup>2</sup> The truth is that Montaigne's skepticism was the product of a mental evolution spread over at least twenty years. In his youth his vivid temperament kept him both credulous and fanatical, so much so that in 1562 he took the reckless oath prescribed by the Catholic Parlement of Paris. As he avows with his incomparable candour, he had been in many things peculiarly susceptible to outside influences, being always ready to respond to the latest pressure;<sup>3</sup> and the knowledge of his susceptibility made him self-distrustful. But gradually he found himself. Beginning to recoil from the ferocities and iniquities of the League, he yet remained for a time hotly anti-Protestant; and it seems to have been his dislike of Protestant criticism that led him to run amuck against reason, at the cost of overthrowing the treatise he had set out to defend. The common end of such petulant skepticism is a plunge into uneasy yet unreasoning faith; but, though Montaigne professed Catholicism to the end, the sheer wickedness of the Catholic policy made it impossible for him to hold sincerely to the creed any more than to the cause.<sup>4</sup> Above all things he hated cruelty.<sup>5</sup> It was the Massacre that finally made Montaigne renounce public life;<sup>6</sup> it must have affected likewise his working philosophy.

That philosophy was not, indeed, an original construction: he found it to his hand partly in the deism of his favourite Seneca; partly in the stoical ethic of Epictetus, then so much appreciated in France; and partly in the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus, of which the Latin translation is known to have been among his

Montaigne spent several years over this translation. By Montaigne's own account at the beginning of the *Apologie*, it was done in a few days. Cp. Miss Lowndes's excellent monograph, *Michel de Montaigne*, pp. 103, 106.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Firmin-Didot, ii, 469.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Lowndes, p. 145. Cp. Champion, *Introd. aux Essais de Montaigne*, 1900.

<sup>3</sup> *Essais*, liv. ii, ch. xii; liv. iii, ch. v. Ed. cited, i, 65; ii, 309.

<sup>4</sup> For a view of Montaigne's development see M. Champion's excellent *Introduction*—a work indispensable to a full understanding of the *Essais*.

<sup>5</sup> Liv. ii, ch. xi.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. the *Essais*, liv. iii, ch. i (ed. cited, ii, 208). Owen gives a somewhat misleading idea of the passage (*French Skeptics*, p. 486).

books; from which he took several of the mottoes inscribed on his library ceiling,<sup>1</sup> and from which he frequently quotes towards the end of his *Apology*. The body of ideas compacted on these bases cannot be called a system: it was not in Montaigne's nature to frame a logical scheme of thought; and he was far from being the philosophic skeptic he set out to be<sup>2</sup> by way of confounding at once the bigots and the atheists. He was essentially *ondoyant et divers*, as he freely admitted. As he put it in a passage added to the later editions of the *Essais*,<sup>3</sup> he was a kind of *metis*, belonging neither to the camp of ignorant faith nor to that of philosophic conviction, whether believing or unbelieving. He early avows that, had he written what he thought and knew of the affairs of his times, he would have published judgments "à mon gré mesme et selon raison," in his opinion true and reasonable, but "illégitimes et punissable."<sup>4</sup> Again, "whatsoever is beyond the compass of custom, we deem likewise to be beyond the compass of reason, God knows how unreasonably, for the most part."<sup>5</sup> Yet in the next breath he will exclaim at those who demand changes. Often he comments keenly on the incredible readiness of men to go to war over trifles; but in another mood he accuses the nobility of his day of unwillingness to take up arms "except upon some urgent and extreme necessity."<sup>6</sup> In the same page he will tell us that he is "easily carried away by the throng," and that he is yet "not very easy to change, forso much as I perceive a like weakness in contrary opinions."<sup>7</sup> "I am very easily to be directed by the world's public order,"<sup>8</sup> is the upshot of his easy meditations. And a conformist he remained in practice to the last, always bearing himself dutifully towards Mother Church, and generally observing the proprieties, though he confesses that he "made it a conscience to eat flesh upon a fish day."<sup>9</sup>

His conformities, verbal and practical, have set certain Catholics upon proving his orthodoxy, though his *Essays* are actually prohibited by the Church. A Benedictine, Dom Devienne, published in 1773 a *Dissertation sur la Religion de Montaigne*, of which the main pleas are that the *Essais* often affirm the divinity of the Christian faith; that the essayist received the freedom of the city of Rome under the eyes of the

<sup>1</sup> Miss Lowndes, *Michel de Montaigne*, p. 131. Cp. Owen, p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> He was consistent enough to doubt the new cosmology of Copernicus (*Essais*, as cited, i, 615); and he even made a rather childish attack on the reform of the Calendar (liv. iii, chs. x, xi); but he was a keen and convinced critic of the prevailing abuses in law and education. Owen's discussion of his opinions is illuminating; but that of Champion makes a still more searching analysis as regards the conflicting tendencies in Montaigne.

<sup>3</sup> Liv. i, ch. liv.

<sup>4</sup> Liv. i, ch. xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Liv. ii, ch. xvii. Ed. cited, ii, 58.

<sup>6</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xiii. Ed. cited, ii, 572.

<sup>7</sup> Liv. i, ch. xx, end.

<sup>8</sup> Liv. ii, ch. ix.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* p. 59.



pope; and that his epitaph declared his orthodoxy! A generation later, one Labouderie undertook to set forth *Le Christianisme de Montaigne* in a volume of 600 pages (1819). This apologist has the courage to face the protest of Pascal: "Montaigne puts everything in a doubt so universal and so general that, doubting even whether he doubts, his uncertainty turns upon itself in a perpetual and unresting circle.....It is in this doubt which doubts of itself, and in this ignorance which is ignorant of itself, that the essence of his opinion consists.....In a word, he is a pure Pyrrhonist" (*Pensées*, supp. to Pt. i, art. 11). The reply of the apologist is that Montaigne never extends his skepticism to "revelation," but on the contrary declares that revelation alone gives man certainties (work cited, p. 127).

That is of course merely the device of a hundred skeptics of the Middle Ages; the old shibboleth of a "twofold truth" modified by a special disparagement of reason, with no attempt to meet the rejoinder that, if reason has no certainties, there can be no certainty that revelation is what it claims to be. When the apologist concludes that Montaigne's aim *en froissant la raison humaine* is to "oblige men to recognize the need of a revelation to fix his incertitudes," it suffices to answer that Montaigne in so many words declares at the outset of the *Apologie de Raimond Sebonde* that he knows nothing of theology, which is equivalent to saying that he is not a student of the Bible. As a matter of fact he never quotes it!

In the last and most characteristic essay of all, discoursing at large *Of Experience*, he makes the most daring attack on laws in general, as being always arbitrary and often irrational, and not seldom more criminal than the offences they punish. After a planless discourse of diseases and diets, follies of habit and follies of caprice, the wisdom of self-rule and the wisdom of irregularity, he contrives to conclude at once that we should make the best of everything and that "only authority is of force with men of common reach and understanding, and is of more weight in a strange language"—a plea for Catholic ritual. Yet in the same page he pronounces that "Supercelestial opinions and under-terrestrial manners are things that amongst us I have ever seen to be of singular accord."

There is no final recognition here of religion as even a useful factor in life. In point of fact Montaigne's whole habit of mind is perfectly fatal to orthodox religion; and it is clear that, despite his professions of conformity, he did not hold the Christian beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the clerical protests of Sterling (*Lond. and Westm. Rev.* July, 1838, p. 346) and Dean Church (*Oxford Essays*, p. 279) with the judgment of Champion, pp. 159-73. Sterling piously declares that "All that we find in him [Montaigne] of Christianity would be suitable to apes and dogs....."

He was simply a deist. Again and again he points to Sokrates as the noblest and wisest of men; there is no reference to Jesus or any of the saints. Whatever he might say in the *Apology*, in the other essays he repeatedly reveals a radical unbelief. The essay on Custom strikes at the root of all orthodoxy, with its thrusts at "the gross imposture of religions, wherewith so many worthy and sufficient men have been besotted and drunken," and its terse avowal that "miracles are according to the ignorance wherein we are by nature, and not according to nature's essence."<sup>2</sup> Above all, he rejected the great superstition of the age, the belief in witchcraft; and, following the lead of Wier,<sup>3</sup> suggested a medical view of the cases of those who professed wizardry.<sup>4</sup> This is the more remarkable because his rubber-ball fashion of following impulsions and rebounding from certainty made him often disparage other men's certainties of disbelief just because they were certainties. Declaring that he prefers above all things qualified and doubtful propositions,<sup>5</sup> he makes as many confident assertions of his own as any man ever did. But the effect of the whole is a perpetual stimulus to questioning. His function in literature was thus to set up a certain mental atmosphere,<sup>6</sup> and this the extraordinary vitality of his utterance enabled him to do to an incalculable extent. He had the gift to disarm or at least to baffle hostility, to charm kings,<sup>6</sup> to stand free between warring factions. No book ever written conveys more fully the sensation of a living voice; and after three hundred years he has as friendly an audience as ever.

Owen notes (*French Skeptics*, p. 446; cp. Champion, pp. 168-69) that, though the papal curia requested Montaigne to alter certain passages in the *Essays*, "it cannot be shown that he erased or modified a single one of the points." Sainte-Beuve, indeed, has noted many safeguarding clauses added to the later versions of the essay on Prayers (i, 56); but they really carry further the process of doubt. M. Champion has well shown how the profession of personal indecision and mere self-portraiture served as a passport for utterances which would have brought instant punishment on an author who showed any clear purpose. As it was, nearly a century passed before the *Essais* were placed upon the Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1676).

To the orthodox of his own day Montaigne seems to have given entire satisfaction. Thus Florimond de Bœmond, in his

<sup>2</sup> Liv. i, ch. xxii. Cp. liv. iii, ch. xi.

<sup>3</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 18, note 42 (1-vol. ed. p. 296); Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 92-95; and Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> As to Henri IV see Perrens, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Below, § 5.

<sup>7</sup> Liv. iii, ch. xi.



*Antichrist* (2e éd. 1599, p. 4), begins his apologetic with a skeptical argument, which he winds up by referring the reader with eulogy to the *Apologie* of Montaigne. The modern resort to the skeptical method in defence of traditional faith seems to date from this time. See Prof. Fortunat Strowski, *Histoire du sentiment religieux en France au xviie siècle*; 1907, i, 55, note. (*De Montaigne à Pascal*.)

The momentum of such an influence is seen in the work of CHARRON (1541-1603), Montaigne's friend and disciple. The *Essais* had first appeared in 1580; the expanded and revised issue in 1588; and in 1601 there appeared Charron's *De la Sagesse*, which gives methodic form and as far as was permissible a direct application to Montaigne's naturalistic principles. Charron's is a curious case of mental evolution. First a lawyer, then a priest, he became a highly successful popular preacher and champion of the Catholic League; and as such was favoured by the notorious Marguerite (the Second<sup>1</sup>) of Navarre. On the assassination of the Duke of Guise by order of Henri III he delivered an indignant protest from the pulpit, of which, however, he rapidly repented.<sup>2</sup> Becoming the friend of Montaigne in 1586, he shows already in 1593, in his *Three Truths*, the influence of the essayist's skepticism,<sup>3</sup> though Charron's book was expressly framed to refute, first, the atheists; second, the pagans, Jews, Mohammedans; and, third, the Christian heretics and schismatics. The *Wisdom*, published only eight years later, is a work of a very different cast, proving a mental change. Even in the first work "the growing teeth of the skeptic are discernible beneath the well-worn stumps of the believer";<sup>4</sup> but the second almost testifies to a new birth. Professedly orthodox, it was yet recognized at once by the devout as a "seminary of impiety,"<sup>5</sup> and brought on its author a persecution that lasted till his sudden death from apoplexy, which his critics pronounced to be a divine dispensation. In the second and rearranged edition, published a year after his death, there are some modifications; but they are so far from essential<sup>6</sup> that Buckle found the book as it stands a kind of pioneer

<sup>1</sup> Not, as Owen states (*French Skeptics*, p. 569), the sister of Francis I, who died when Charron was eight years old, but the daughter of Henri II, and first wife of Henri of Navarre, afterwards Henri IV.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Prof. Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, as cited, p. 170 sq., and the *Discours Chrétien* of Charron—an extract from a letter of 1589—published with the 1609 ed. of the *Sagesse*.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Sainte-Beuve, as cited by Owen, p. 571, note, and Owen's own words, p. 572.

<sup>4</sup> Owen, p. 571. Cp. pp. 573, 574.

<sup>5</sup> Bayle, art. CHARRON. "A brutal atheism" is the account of Charron's doctrine given by the Jesuit Garasse. Cp. Perrens, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Owen (p. 570) comes to this conclusion after carefully collating the editions. Cp. p. 587, note. The whole of the alterations, including those proposed by President Jeannin, will be found set forth in the edition of 1607, and the reprints of that. One of the modified passages (first ed. p. 257; ed. 1609, p. 785) is the Montaignesque comment (noted by Prof.

manual of rationalism.<sup>1</sup> Its way of putting all religions on one level, as being alike grounded on bad evidence and held on prejudice, is only the formal statement of an old idea, found, like so many others of Charron's, in Montaigne; but the didactic purpose and method turn the skeptic's shrug into a resolute propaganda. So with the formal and earnest insistence that true morality cannot be built on religious hopes and fears—a principle which Charron was the first to bring directly home to the modern intelligence,<sup>2</sup> as he did the principle of development in religious systems.<sup>3</sup> Attempting as it does to construct a systematic practical philosophy of life, the book puts aside so positively the claims of the theologians,<sup>4</sup> and so emphatically subordinates religion to the rule of natural reason,<sup>5</sup> that it constitutes a virtual revolution in public doctrine for Christendom. As Montaigne is the effective beginner of modern literature, so is Charron the beginner of modern secular teaching. He is a Naturalist, professing theism; and it is not surprising to find that for a time his book was even more markedly than Montaigne's the French "freethinker's breviary."

Strowski, as cited, pp. 164-65, 183 sq., founding on Garasse and Mersenne. Strowski at first pronounces Charron "in reality only a collector of commonplaces" (p. 166); but afterwards obviously confesses (p. 191) that "his audacities are astonishing," and explains that "he formulates, perhaps without knowing it, a whole doctrine of irreligion which outgoes the man and the time—a thought stronger than the thinker!" And again he forgetfully speaks of "cette critique hardie et méthodique, j'allais écrire scientifique" (p. 240). All this would be a new form of commonplace.

It was only powerful protection that could save such a book from proscription; but Charron and his book had the support at once of Henri IV and the President Jeannin—the former a proved indifferentist to religious forms; the latter the author of the remark that a peace with two religions was better than a war which had none. Such a temper had become predominant even among professed Catholics, as may be gathered from the immense popularity of the *Satyre Menippée* (1594).—Ridiculing as it did the insensate fanaticism of the Catholic League, that composition was naturally

Strowski, p. 195) on the fashion in which men's religion is determined by their place of birth. "C'est du Montaigne aggravé," complains M. Strowski. And it is left unchanged in substance.

<sup>1</sup> "The first.....attempt made in a modern language to construct a system of morals without the aid of theology" (3-vol. ed. ii, 19; 1-vol. ed. p. 296).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Owen, pp. 580-85.

<sup>3</sup> Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 21; 1-vol. ed. p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., the preface to the first edition, *ad init.*

<sup>5</sup> E.g., liv. ii, ch. xxviii of revised ed. (ed. 1609, p. 399).



described as the work of atheists; but there seems to have been no such element in the case, the authors being all Catholics of good standing, and some of them even having a record for zeal.<sup>1</sup> The *Satyre* was in fact the triumphant revolt of the humorous common sense of France against the tyranny of fanaticism, which it may be said to have overthrown at one stroke,<sup>2</sup> inasmuch as it made possible the entry of Henri into Paris. By a sudden appeal to secular sanity and the sense of humour it made the bulk of the Catholic mass ashamed of its past course.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is expressly testified by the Catholic historian De Thou that all the rich and the aristocracy held the League in abomination.<sup>4</sup> In such an atmosphere rationalism must needs germinate, especially when the king's acceptance of Catholicism dramatized the unreality of the grounds of strife.

After the assassination of the king in 1610, the last of the bloody deeds which had kept France on the rack of uncertainty in religion's name for three generations, the spirit of rationalism naturally did not wane. In the Paris of the early seventeenth century, doubtless, the new emancipation came to be associated, as "libertinism," with licence as well as with freethinking. In the nature of the case there could be no serious and free literary discussion of the new problems either of life or belief, save insofar as they had been handled by Montaigne and Charron; and, inasmuch as the accounts preserved of the freethought of the age are almost invariably those of its worst enemies, it is chiefly their side of the case that has been presented. Thus in 1623 the Jesuit Father François Garasse published a thick quarto of over a thousand pages, entitled *La Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits de ce temps, ou prétendus tels*, in which he assails the "libertins" of the day with an infuriated industry. The eight books into which he divides his treatise proceed upon eight alleged maxims of the freethinkers, which run as follows:—

I. There are very few good wits [*bons Esprits*] in the world; and the fools, that is to say, the common run of men, are not

<sup>1</sup> See the biog. pref. of Labitte to the Charpentier edition, p. xxv. The *Satyre* in its own turn freely charges atheism and incest on Leaguers; e.g., the *Harangue de M. de Lyon*, ed. cited, pp. 79, 86. This was by Rapin, whom Garasse particularly accuses of *libertinage*. See the *Doctrine Curieuse*, as cited, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> It had to be four times reprinted in a few weeks; and the subsequent editions are innumerable. Ever since its issue it has been an anti-fanatical force in France.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Ch. Read's introd. to ed. 1886 of the *Satyre*, p. iii. (An exact reprint.) The *Satyre* anticipates (ed. Read, p. 281; ed. Labitte, p. 227) the modern saying that the worst peace is better than the best war.

<sup>4</sup> De Thou, T. v, liv. 98, p. 63, cited in ed. 1699 of the *Satyre*, p. 489. De Thou was one of the Catholics who loathed the savagery of the Church; and was accordingly branded by the pope as a heretic. Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 291, 300, notes.

capable of our doctrine; therefore it will not do to speak freely, but in secret, and among trusting and cabalistic souls.

II. Good wits [*beaux Esprits*] believe in God only by way of form, and as a matter of public policy (*par Maxime d'Etat*).

III. A *bel Esprit* is free in his belief, and is not readily to be taken in by the quantity of nonsense that is propounded to the simple populace.

IV. All things are conducted and governed by Destiny, which is irrevocable, infallible, immovable, necessary, eternal, and inevitable to all men whomsoever.

V. It is true that the book called the Bible, or the Holy Scripture, is a good book (*un gentil livre*), and contains a lot of good things; but that a *bon esprit* should be obliged to believe under pain of damnation all that is therein, down to the tail of Tobit's dog, does not follow.

VI. There is no other divinity or sovereign power in the world but NATURE, which must be satisfied in all things, without refusing anything to our body or senses that they desire of us in the exercise of their natural powers and faculties.

VII. Supposing there be a God, as it is decorous to admit, so as not to be always at odds with the superstitious, it does not follow that there are creatures which are purely intellectual and separated from matter. All that is in Nature is composite, and therefore there are neither angels nor devils in the world, and it is not certain that the soul of man is immortal.

VIII. It is true that to live happily it is necessary to extinguish and drown all scruples; but all the same it does not do to appear impious and abandoned, for fear of offending the simple or losing the support of the superstitious.

This is obviously neither candid<sup>1</sup> nor competent writing; and as it happens there remains proof, in the case of the life of La Mothe le Vayer, that "earnest freethought in the beginning of the seventeenth century afforded a *point d'appui* for serious-minded men, which neither the corrupt Romanism nor the narrow Protestantism of the period could furnish."<sup>2</sup> Garasse's own doctrine was that "the true liberty of the mind consists in a simple and docile (*sage*) belief in all that the Church propounds, indifferently and without distinction."<sup>3</sup> The later social history of Catholic France is the sufficient comment on the

<sup>1</sup> M. Labitte, himself a Catholic, speaks of Garasse's "forfanterie habituelle" and "ton d'insolence sincère qui déguise tant de mensonges" (Pref. cited, p. xxxi.). Prof. Strowski (p. 130) admits too that "Il ne faut pas trop s'attacher aux révélations sensationnelles du père Garasse: les maximes qu'il prête aux beaux esprits, il les leur prête en effet, elles ne leur appartiennent pas toutes. La société secrète, la *Confrérie des Bouteilles*, ou il les dit engagés, est un invention de sa verve bouffonne." But the Professor, with a "N'importe!", forgives him, and trades on his matter.

<sup>2</sup> Owen, *French Skeptics*, p. 659. Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 97, citing Maury, as to the resistance of *libertins* to the superstition about witchcraft.

<sup>3</sup> *Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits*, as cited, p. 208. This is one of the passages which fully explain the opinion of the orthodox of that age that Garasse "helped rather than hindered atheism" (Reimmann, *Hist. Atheism*, 1725, p. 408).



efficacy of such teaching to regulate life. In any case the new ideas steadily gained ground; and on the heels of the treatise of Garasse appeared that of Marin Mersenne, *L'impiété des Déistes, Athées et Libertins de ce temps combattue, avec la refutation des opinions de Charron, de Cardan, de Jordan Brun, et des quatraines du Déiste* (1624). In a previous treatise, *Quæstiones celeberrimæ in Genesim* .....in quo volumine Athei et Deisti impugnantur et expugnantur (1623), Mersenne set agoing the often-quoted assertion that, while atheists abounded throughout Europe, they were so specially abundant in France that in Paris alone there were some fifty thousand. Even taking the term "atheist" in the loosest sense in which such writers used it, the statement was never credited by any contemporary, or by its author; but neither did anyone doubt that there was an unprecedented amount of unbelief. The *Quatraines du Déiste*, otherwise *L'Antibigot*, was a poem of one hundred and six stanzas, never printed, but widely circulated in manuscript in its day. It is poor poetry enough, but its doctrine of a Lucretian God who left the world to itself sufficed to create a sensation, and inspired Mersenne to write a poem in reply.<sup>1</sup> Such were the signs of the times when Pascal was in his cradle.

Mersenne's statistical assertion was made in two sheets of the *Quæstiones Celeberrimæ*, "qui ont été supprimé dans la plupart des exemplaires, à cause, sans doute, de leur exagération" (Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 28, where the passage is cited). The suppressed sheets included a list of the "atheists" of the time, occupying five folio columns. (Julian Hibbert, *Plutarchus and Theophrastus on Superstition*, etc., 1828; App. Catal. of Works written against Atheism, p. 3; Prosper Marchand, *Lettre sur le Cymbalum Mundi*, in éd. Bibliophile Jacob, 1841, p. 17, note; Prof. Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, 1907, p. 138 sq.) Mersenne himself, in the preface to his book, stultifies his suppressed assertion by declaring that the impious in Paris boast falsely of their number, which is really small, unless heretics be reckoned as atheists. Garasse, writing against them, all the while professed to know only five atheists, three of them Italians (Strowski, as cited).

<sup>1</sup> Mersenne ascribed the quatrains to a skilled controversialist. *Quæstiones*, pref.



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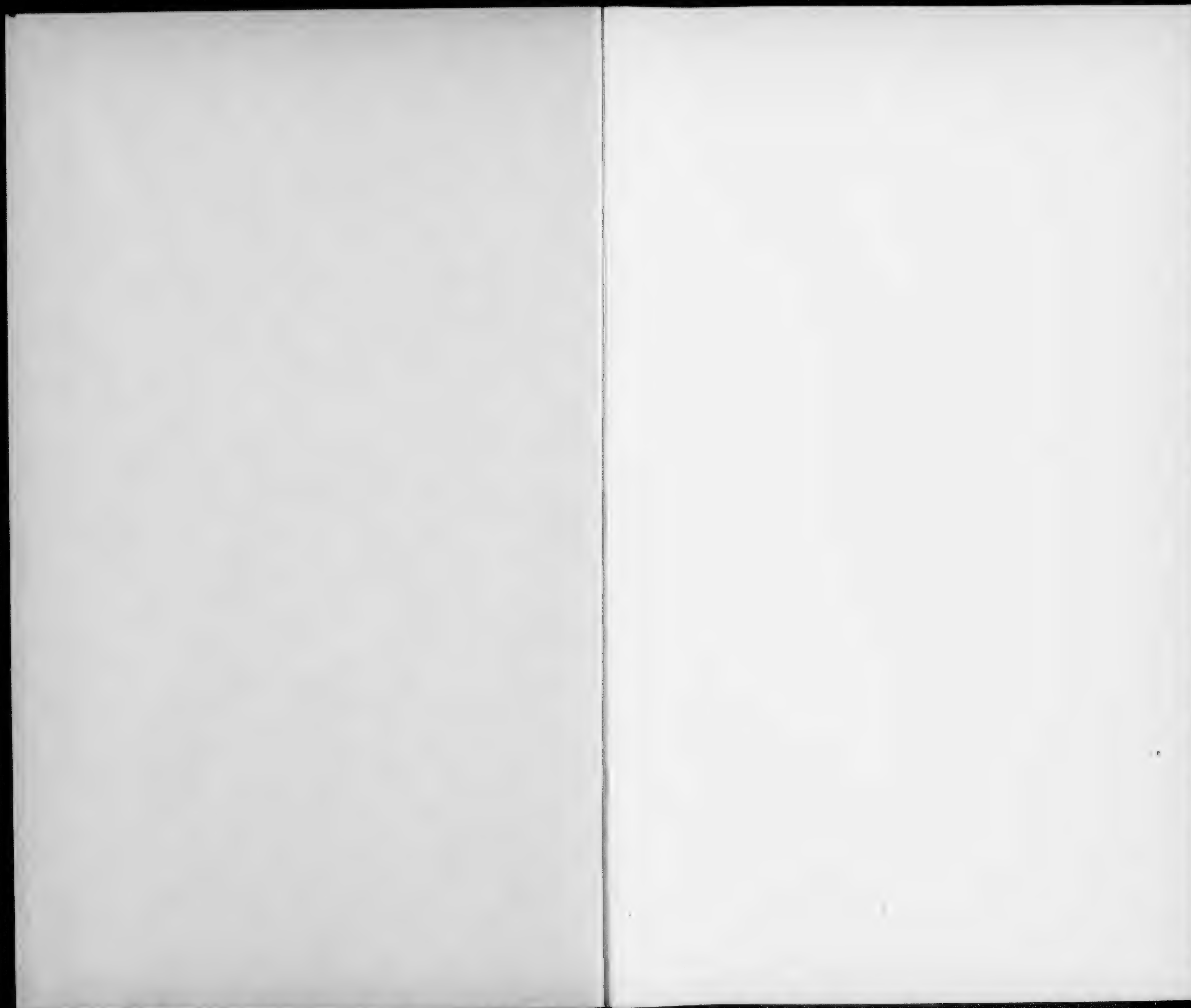
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A SHORT  
HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT



A SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
FREETHOUGHT  
ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY  
JOHN M. ROBERTSON

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

• IN TWO VOLUMES  
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ERRATA

- P. 138, line 26, for "1583" read "1563"  
P. 229, line 5 of note 1, for "Receuil" read  
"Recueil"  
P. 241, under "1767," for "religious" read  
"religions"  
P. 241, under "1767," for "Freret" read  
"Fréret," and so elsewhere



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## CHAPTER XIII

## THE RISE OF MODERN FREETHOUGHT—(Continued)

## § 4. England

While France was thus passing from general fanaticism to a large measure of freethought, England was passing by a less tempestuous path to a hardly less advanced stage of opinion. It was indeed a bloody age; and in 1535 we have record of nineteen men and five women of Holland, apparently Anabaptists, who denied the "humanity" of Christ and rejected infant baptism and transubstantiation, being sentenced to be burned alive—two suffering at Smithfield, and the rest at other towns, by way of example. Others in Henry's reign suffered the same penalty for the same offence; and in 1538 a priest named Nicholson or Lambert, refusing on the King's personal pressure to recant, was "brent in Smithfield" for denying the bodily presence in the eucharist.<sup>1</sup> The first decades of "Reformation" in England truly saw the opening of new vials of blood. More and Fisher and scores of lesser men died as Catholics for denying the King's "supremacy" in religion; as many more for denying the Catholic tenets which the King held to the last; and not a few by the consent of More and Fisher for translating or circulating the sacred books. Latimer, martyred under Mary, had applauded the burning of the Anabaptists. One generation slew for denial of the humanity of Christ; the next for denial of his divinity. Under Edward VI there were burned no Catholics, but several heretics, including Joan Bocher and a Dutch Unitarian, George Van Pare, described as a man of saintly life.<sup>2</sup> Still the English evolution was less destructive than the French or the German, and the comparative bloodlessness of the strife between Protestant and Catholic under Mary<sup>3</sup> and Elizabeth, the treatment

<sup>1</sup> Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1615, pp. 570, 575.

<sup>2</sup> Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. Nares, ii, 179; iii, 289; Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, ed. 1848-54, ii, 100.

<sup>3</sup> The Marian persecutions undoubtedly did much to stimulate Protestantism. It is not generally realized that many of the burnings of heretics under Mary were quasi-sacrifices on her behalf. On each occasion of her hopes of pregnancy being disappointed, some victims were sent to the stake. See Strype, ed. cited, iii, 196, and Peter Martyr, there cited; Froude, ed. 1870, v, 521 sq., 539 sq. The influence of Spanish ecclesiastics may be inferred. The expulsions of the Jews and the Moriscoes from Spain were by way of averting the wrath of God. Still, a Spanish priest at Court preached in favour of mercy. Lingard, ed. 1855, v, 231.



of the Jesuit propaganda under the latter queen as a political rather than a doctrinal question,<sup>1</sup> prevented any such vehemence of recoil from religious ideals as took place in France. When in 1575 the law *De hæretico comburendo*, which had slept for seventeen years, was set to work anew under Elizabeth, the first victims were Dutch Anabaptists. Of a congregation of them at Aldgate, twenty-seven were imprisoned, of whom ten were burned, and the rest deported. Two others, John Wielmacker and Hendrich Ter Woort, were anti-Trinitarians, and were burned accordingly. Foxe appealed to the Queen to appoint any punishment short of death, or even that of hanging, rather than the horrible death by burning; but in vain. "All parties at the time concurred" in approving the course taken.<sup>2</sup> Orthodoxy was rampant.

Unbelief, as we have seen, however, there certainly was; and it is recorded that Walter, Earl of Essex, on his deathbed at Dublin in 1576, murmured that among his countrymen neither Popery nor Protestantism prevailed: "there was nothing but infidelity, infidelity, infidelity; atheism, atheism; no religion, no religion."<sup>3</sup> And when we turn aside from the beaten paths of Elizabethan literature we see clearly what is partly visible from those paths—a number of free-thinking variations from the norm of faith. Ascham, as we saw, found some semblance of atheism shockingly common among the travelled upper class of his day; and the testimonies continue. Edward Kirke, writing his "glosses" to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1578, observes that "it was an old opinion, and yet is continued in some men's conceit, that men of years have no fear of God at all, or not so much as younger folk," experience having made them skeptical. Erasmus, he notes, in his *Adages* makes the proverb "Nemo senex metuit Jovem" signify merely that "old men are far from superstition and belief in false Gods." But Kirke insists that, "his great learning notwithstanding, it is too plain to be gainsaid that old men are much more inclined to such fond fooleries than younger men,"<sup>4</sup> apparently meaning that elderly men in his day were commonly skeptical about divine providence.

Other writers of the day do not limit unbelief to the aged. Lilly, in his *Euphues* (1578), referring to England in general or Oxford in particular as Athens, asks: "Be there not many in Athens which think there is no God, no redemption, no resurrection?" Further,

<sup>1</sup> The number slain was certainly not small. It amounted to at least 190, perhaps to 204. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1839, p. 596-98. Under Mary there perished some 288. Durham Dunlop, *The Church under the Tudors*, 1869, p. 104 and refs.

<sup>2</sup> Soames, as cited, pp. 213-18, and refs.

<sup>3</sup> Froude, *Hist. of England*, ed. 1870, x, 545 (ed. 1875, xi, 199), citing MSS. Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> Gloss to February in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Globe ed. pp. 451-52.

he complains that "it was openly reported of an old man in Naples that there was more lightness in Athens than in all Italy.....more Papists, more *Atheists*, more sects, more schisms, than in all the monarchies in the world";<sup>1</sup> and he proceeds to frame an absurd dialogue of "Euphues and Atheos," in which the latter, "monstrous, yet tractable to be persuaded,"<sup>2</sup> is converted with a burlesque facility. Lilly, who writes as a man-of-the-world believer, is a poor witness as to the atheistic arguments current; but those he cites are so much better than his own, up to the point of terrified collapse on the atheist's part, that he had doubtless heard them. The atheist speaks as a pantheist, identifying deity with the universe; and readily meets a simple appeal to Scripture with the reply that "whosoever denieth a godhead denieth also the Scriptures which testifie of him."<sup>3</sup> But in one of his own plays, played in 1584, Lilly puts on the stage a glimpse of current controversy in a fashion which suggests that he had not remained so contemptuously confident of the self-evident character of theism. In *Campaspe* (i, 3) he introduces, undramatically enough, Plato, Aristotle, Cleanthes, Crates, and other philosophers, who converse concerning "natural causes" and "supernatural effects." Aristotle is made to confess that he "cannot by natural reason give any reason of the ebbing and flowing of the sea"; and Plato contends against Cleanthes, "searching for things which are not to be found," that "there is no man so savage in whom resteth not this divine particle, that there is an omnipotent, eternal, and divine mover, which may be called God." Cleanthes replies that "that first mover, which you term God, is the instrument of all the movings which we attribute to Nature. The earth.....seasons.....fruits.....the whole firmament.....and whatsoever else appeareth miraculous, what man almost of mean capacity but can prove it natural." Nothing is concluded, and the debate is adjourned. Anaxarchus declares: "I will take part with Aristotle, that there is *Natura naturans*, and yet not God"; while Crates rejoins: "And I with Plato, that there is *Deus optimus maximus*, and not Nature."

It is a curious dialogue to put upon the stage, by the mouth of children-actors, and the arbitrary ascription to Aristotle of high theistic views, in a scene in which he is expressly described by a fellow philosopher as a Naturalist, suggests that Lilly felt the danger of giving offence by presenting the supreme philosopher as an atheist.

<sup>1</sup> *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, Arber's reprint, pp. 140, 153. That the reference was mainly to Oxford is to be inferred from the address "To my verie good friends the Gentlemen Schollers of Oxford," prefixed to the ed. of 1581. *Id.* p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 161, 166.



It is evident, however, both from *Euphues* and from *Campaspe*, that naturalistic views were in some vogue, else they had not been handled in the theatre and in a book essentially planned for the general reader. But however firmly held, they could not be directly published; and a dozen years later, over thirty years after the outburst of Ascham, we still find only a sporadic and unwritten freethought, however abundant, going at times in fear of its life.

Private discussion, indeed, there must have been, if there be any truth in Bacon's phrase that "atheists will ever be talking of that opinion, as if they.....would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others"<sup>1</sup>—an argument which would make short work of the vast literature of apologetic theism—but even private talk had need be cautious, and there could be no publication of atheistic opinions. Printed rationalism could go no further than such a protest against superstition as Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which, however, is a sufficiently remarkable expression of reason in an age in which a Bodin held angrily by the delusion.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth was herself substantially irreligious,<sup>3</sup> and preferred to keep the clergy few in number and subordinate in influence;<sup>4</sup> but her Ministers regarded the Church as part of the State system, and punished all open or at least aggressive heresy in the manner of the Inquisition. Yet the imported doctrine of the subjective character of hell and heaven,<sup>5</sup> taken up by Marlowe, held its ground, and is denounced by Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses*<sup>6</sup> (1583); and other foreign philosophy of the same order found religious acceptance. A sect called the "Family of Love," deriving from Holland (already "a country fruitfull of heretics"),<sup>7</sup> went so far as to hold that "Christ doth not signify any one person, but a quality whereof many are partakers"—a doctrine which we have seen ascribed by Calvin to the *libertins* of Geneva a generation before;<sup>8</sup> but it does

<sup>1</sup> Essay Of Atheism.

<sup>2</sup> Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 103-104. Scot's book (now made accessible by a reprint, 1886) had practically no influence in his own day; and King James, who wrote against it, caused it to be burned by the hangman in the next. Scot inserts the "infidelitie of atheists" in the list of intellectual evils on his title-page; but save for an allusion to "the abhominat[i]on of idolatrie" all the others indicted are aspects of the black art.

<sup>3</sup> "No woman ever lived who was so totally destitute of the sentiment of religion" (Green, *Short History*, ch. vii, § 3, p. 369).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1839, p. 225. Yet when Morris, the attorney of the Duchy of Lancaster, introduced in Parliament a Bill to restrain the power of the ecclesiastical courts, she had him dismissed and imprisoned for life, being determined that the control should remain, through those courts, in her own hands. Heylyn, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. 1849, pref. vol. i, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>5</sup> See above, vol. i, pp. 435, 446, 459.

<sup>6</sup> Collier's Reprint, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup> Camden, *Annals of Elizabeth*, sub. ann. 1580; 3rd ed. 1635, p. 218. Cp. Soames, p. 214.

<sup>8</sup> Hooker, Pref. to *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ch. iii, § 9, ed. 1850. Camden (p. 219) states that the Dutch teacher Henry Nichalai, whose works were translated for the sect, "gave out that he did partake of God, and God of his humanity."

not appear that they were persecuted.<sup>1</sup> Some isolated propagandists, however, paid the last penalty. One Matthew Hamont or Hamond, a ploughwright, of Hetherset, was in 1579 tried by the Bishop and Consistory of Norwich "for that he denyed Christe," and, being found guilty, was burned, after having had his ears cut off, "because he spake wordes of blasphemie against the Queen's Maiestie and others of her Counsell."<sup>2</sup> The victim would thus seem to have been given to violence of speech; but the record of his negations, which suggest developments from the Anabaptist movement, is none the less notable. In Stow's wording,<sup>3</sup> they run:—

"That the newe Testament and Gospell of Christe are but mere foolishnesse, a storie of menne, or rather a mere fable.

"Item, that man is restored to grace by the meere mercy of God, wythout the meane of Christ's blood, death, and passion.

"Item, that Christe is not God, nor the Saviour of the world, but a meere man, a sinfull man, and an abhominable Idoll.

"Item, that al they that worshippe him are abhominable Idolaters; And that Christe did not rise agayne from death to life by the power of his Godhead, neither, that hee did ascende into Heaven.

"Item, that the holy Ghoste is not God, neither that there is any suche holy Ghoste.

"Item, that Baptisme is not necessarie in the Church of God, neither the use of the sacrament of the body and bloude of Christ."

There is record also of a freethinker named John Lewes burned at the same place in 1583 for "denying the Godhead of Christ, and holding other detestable heresies," in the manner of Hamond.<sup>4</sup> In the same year Elias Thacker and John Coping were hanged at St. Edmondsbury "for spreading certaine bookes, seditiously penned by one Robert Browne against the Booke of Common Prayer"; and "their bookes so many as could be found were burnt before them."<sup>5</sup> Further, one Peter Cole, an Ipswich tanner, was burned in 1587 (also at Norwich) for similar doctrine; and Francis Kett, a young clergyman, ex-fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was burned at the same place in 1589 for heresy of the Unitarian order.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, i, 458, as to a much more pronounced heresy in 1549, which also seems to have escaped punishment. Camden tells that the books of the "Family of Love" were burnt in 1580, but mentions no other penalties. Stow records that on October 9, 1580, "proclamation was published at London for the apprehension and severe punishing of all persons suspected to be of the family of love." Ed. 1615, p. 687. Five of them had been frightened into a public recantation in 1575. *Id.* p. 679.

<sup>2</sup> May 13, 1579. The burning was on the 20th.

<sup>3</sup> Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1580, pp. 1, 194-95. Ed. 1615, p. 695.

<sup>4</sup> Stow, ed. 1615, p. 697; *David's Evidence*, by William Burton, Preacher of Reading, 1592 (?), p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Stow, ed. 1615, p. 696.

<sup>6</sup> Burton, as cited. See below, pp. 7, 12, as to Kett's writings.



Hamond and Cole seem, however, to have been in their own way religious men,<sup>1</sup> and Kett a devout mystic, with ideas of a Second Advent.<sup>2</sup> All founded on the Bible.

Most surprising of all perhaps is the record of the trial of one John Hilton, clerk in holy orders, before the Upper House of Convocation on December 22, 1584, on the charge of having "said in a sermon at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields that the Old and New Testaments are but fables." (Lansdowne MSS. British Museum, No. 982, fol. 46, cited by Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Robert Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 39, note.) As Hilton confessed to the charge and made abjuration, it may be surmised that he had spoken under the influence of liquor. Even on that view, however, such an episode tells of a considerable currency of unbelieving criticism.

Apart from constructive heresy, the perpetual religious dissensions of the time were sure to stimulate doubt; and there appeared quite a number of treatises directed wholly or partly against explicit unbelief, as: *The Faith of the Church Militant*, translated from the Latin of the Danish divine Hemming (1581), and addressed "to the confutation of the Jewes, Turks, Atheists, Papists, Hereticks, and all other adversaries of the truth whatsoever"; "*The Touchstone of True Religion*.....against the impietie of Atheists, Epicures, Libertines, Hippocrites, and Temporisers of these times" (1590); *An Enemy to Atheisme*, translated by T. Rogers from the Latin of Avenar (1591); the preacher Henry Smith's *God's Arrow against Atheists* (1593, rep. 1611); an English translation of the second volume of La Primaudaye's *L'Académie Française*, containing a refutation of atheistic doctrine; and no fewer than three "Treatises of the Nature of God"—all anonymous, the third known to be by Bishop Thomas Morton—all appearing in the year 1599.

All this smoke—eight apologetic treatises in eighteen years—implies some fire; and the translator of La Primaudaye, one "T. B.," declares in his dedication that there has been a general growth of atheism in England and on the continent, which he traces to "that Monster Machiavell." Among English atheists of that school he ranks the dramatist Robert Greene, who had died in 1592; and it has been argued, not quite convincingly, that it was to Machiavelli that Greene had pointed, in his death-bed recantation *A Groatworth*

<sup>1</sup> Art. MATTHEW HAMOND, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

<sup>2</sup> Art. FRANCIS KETT, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

of Wit (1592), as the atheistic instructor of his friend Marlowe,<sup>1</sup> who introduces "Machiavel" as cynical prologist to his *Jew of Malta*. Greene's own "atheism" had been for the most part a matter of bluster and disorderly living; and we find his zealously orthodox friend Thomas Nashe, in his *Strange News* (1592), calling the Puritan zealot who used the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate "a mighty platformer of atheism"; even as his own and Greene's enemy, Gabriel Harvey, called Nashe an atheist.<sup>2</sup> But Nashe in his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1592), though he speaks characteristically of the "atheistical Julian," discusses contemporary atheism in a fashion descriptive of an actual growth of the opinion, concerning which he alleges that there is no "sect now in England so scattered [*i.e.*, so widely spread] as atheisme." The "outward atheist," he declares, "establishes reason as his God"; and he offers some sufficiently primitive arguments by way of confutation. "They follow the Pironicks [*i.e.*, Pyrrhonists], whose position and opinion it is that there is no hell or misery but opinion. Impudently they persist in it, that the late discovered Indians show antiquities thousands before Adam." For the rest, they not only reject the miracles of Moses as mere natural expedients misrepresented, but treat the whole Bible as "some late writers of our side" treat the Apocrypha. And Nashe complains feelingly that while the atheists "are special men of wit," and that "the Romish seminaries have not allured unto them so many good wits as atheism," the preachers who reply to them are men of dull understanding, the product of a system under which preferment is given to graduates on the score not of capacity but of mere gravity and solemnity. "It is the superabundance of wit," declares Nashe, "that makes atheists: will you then hope to beat them down with fusty brown-bread dorbellism?"<sup>3</sup> There had arisen, in short, a ferment of rationalism which was henceforth never to disappear from English life.

In 1593, indeed, we find atheism formally charged against two famous men, CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE and Sir WALTER RALEIGH, of whom the first is documentarily connected with Kett, and the second in turn with Marlowe. An official document,<sup>4</sup> preserved by

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 42-50. It is quite clear that Malone and the critics who have followed him were wrong in supposing the unnamed instructor to be Francis Kett, who was a devout Unitarian. Prof. Storojenko speaks of Kett as having been made an Arian at Norwich, after his return there in 1585, by the influence of Lewes and Haworth. Query Hamond?

<sup>2</sup> In *Pierce's Supererogation*, Collier's ed. p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Rep. of Nashe's Works in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. vol. iv, pp. 172, 173, 178, 182, 183, etc. Ed. McKerrow, 1904, ii, 114-129.

<sup>4</sup> MS. Harl. 6853, fol. 320. It is given in full in the appendix to the first issue of the selected plays of Marlowe in the Mermaid Series, edited by Mr. Havelock Ellis: and, with omissions, in the editions of Cunningham, Dyce, and Bullen.



some chance, reveals that Marlowe was given—whether or not over the wine-cup—to singularly audacious derision of the received beliefs; and so explicit is the evidence that it is nearly certain he would have been executed for blasphemy had he not been privately killed (1593) while the proceedings were pending. The “atheism” imputed to him is not made out in any detail; but many of the other utterances are notably in keeping with Marlowe’s daring temper; and they amount to unbelief of a stringent kind. In *Doctor Faustus*<sup>1</sup> he makes Mephistopheles affirm that “Hell hath no limits .....but where we are is hell”—a doctrine which we have seen to be current before his time; and in his private talk he had gone much further. Nashe doubtless had him in mind when he spoke of men of “superabundance of wit.” Not only did he question, with Raleigh, the Biblical chronology: he affirmed “That Moyses was but a juggler, and that one Heriots” [*i.e.*, Thomas Harriott, or Harriots, the astronomer, one of Raleigh’s circle] “can do more than he”; and concerning Jesus he used language incomparably more offensive to orthodox feeling than that of Hamond and Kett. There is more in all this than a mere assimilation of Machiavelli; though the further saying “that the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe”—put also by Greene [if not by Marlowe], with much force of versification, in the mouth of a villain-hero in the anonymous play of *Selimus*<sup>2</sup>—tells of that influence. Marlowe was indeed not the man to swear by any master without adding something of his own. Atheism, however, is not inferrible from any of his works: on the contrary, in the second part of his famous first play he makes his hero, described by the repentant Greene as the “atheist Tamburlaine,” declaim of deity with signal eloquence, though with a pantheistic cast of phrase. In another passage, a Moslem personage claims to be on the side of a Christ who would punish perjury; and in yet another the hero is made to trample under foot the pretensions of Mohammed.<sup>3</sup> It was probably his imputation of perjury to Christian rulers in particular that earned for Marlowe the malignant resentment which inspired the various edifying comments published after his unedifying death. Had he not perished as he did in a tavern brawl, he might have had the nobler fate of a martyr.

Concerning Raleigh, again, there is no shadow of proof of atheism,

<sup>1</sup> Act II, sc. i.

<sup>2</sup> Grosart’s ed. in “Temple Dramatists” series, II. 246–371. There is plenty of “irreligion” in the passage, but not atheism, though there is a denial of a future state (365–70). The lines in question strongly suggest Marlowe’s influence or authorship, which indeed is claimed by Mr. C. Crawford for the whole play. But all the external evidence ascribes the play to Greene.

<sup>3</sup> *Tamburlaine*, Part II, Act II, sc. ii, iii; V, sc. i.

though his circle, which included the Earls of Northumberland and Oxford, was called a “school of atheism” in a Latin pamphlet by the Jesuit Parsons,<sup>1</sup> published at Rome in 1593; and this reputation clung to him. It is matter of literary history, however, that he, like Montaigne, had been influenced by the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus;<sup>2</sup> his short essay *The Sceptick* being a naïf exposition of the thesis that “the sceptick doth neither affirm neither deny any position; but doubteth of it, and applyeth his Reason against that which is affirmed, or denied, to justifie his non-consenting.”<sup>3</sup> The essay itself, nevertheless, proceeds upon a set of wildly false propositions in natural history, concerning which the adventurous reasoner has no doubts whatever; and altogether we may be sure that his artificial skepticism did not carry him far in philosophy. In the *Discovery of Guiana* (1600) he declares that he is “resolved” of the truth of the stories of men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders; and in his *History of the World* (1603–16) he insists that the stars and other celestial bodies “incline the will by mediation of the sensitive appetite.”<sup>4</sup> In other directions, however, he was less credulous. In the same *History* he points out, as Marlowe had done in talk, how incompatible was such a phenomenon as the mature civilization of ancient Egypt in the days of Abraham with the orthodox chronology.<sup>5</sup> This, indeed, was heresy enough, then and later, seeing that not only did Bishop Pearson, in 1659, in a work on *The Creed* which has been circulated down to the nineteenth century, indignantly denounce all who departed from the figures in the margin of the Bible; but Coleridge, a century and a half later, took the very instance of Egyptian history as triumphantly establishing the accuracy of the Bible record against the French atheists.<sup>6</sup> As regards Raleigh’s philosophy, the evidence goes to show only that he was ready to read a Unitarian essay, presumably that already mentioned, supposed to be Kett’s; and that he had intercourse with Marlowe and others (in particular his secretary, Harriott) known to be freethinkers. A prosecution begun against him on this score, at the time of the inquiry concerning Marlowe (when Raleigh was in disgrace with the Queen), came to nothing. It had been led up to by a translation of Parsons’s pamphlet, which affirmed that his private group was known as “Sir Walter Rawley’s school of Atheisme,” and that therein “both

<sup>1</sup> Writing as Andrew Philopater. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, art. ROBERT PARSONS, and Storojenko, as cited, i. 36, and *note*.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into Latin by Henri Estienne in 1562.

<sup>3</sup> *Remains of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. 1657, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Bk. ii, ch. i, sec. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Bk. i, ch. i, sec. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Essay on the *Prometheus*.



Moyses and our Savior, the Old and the New Testaments, are jested at, and the scholars taught among other things to spell God backwards."<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been idle gossip, though it tells of unbelief somewhere; and Raleigh's own writings always indicate<sup>2</sup> belief in the Bible; though his dying speech and epitaph are noticeably deistic. That he was a deist, given to free discussion, seems the probable truth.

In passing sentence at the close of Raleigh's trial for treason in 1603, in which his guilt is at least no clearer than the inequity of the proceedings, Lord Chief Justice Popham unscrupulously taunted him with his reputation for heresy. "You have been taxed by the world with the defence of the most heathenish and blasphemous opinions, which I list not to repeat, because Christian ears cannot endure to hear them, nor the authors and maintainers of them be suffered to live in any Christian commonwealth. You know what men said of Harpool."<sup>3</sup> If the preface to his *History of the World*, written in the Tower, be authentic, Raleigh was at due pains to make clear his belief in deity, and to repudiate alike atheism and pantheism. "I do also account it," he declares, "an impiety monstrous, to confound God and Nature, be it but in terms."<sup>4</sup> And he is no more tolerant than his judge when he discusses the question of the eternity of the universe, then the crucial issue as between orthodoxy and doubt. "Whosoever will make choice rather to believe in eternal deformity [=want of form] or in eternal dead matter, than in eternal light and eternal life, let eternal death be his reward. For it is a madness of that kind, as wanteth terms to express it."<sup>5</sup> Inasmuch as Aristotle was the great authority for the denounced opinion, Raleigh is anti-Aristotelean. "I shall never be persuaded that God hath shut up all light of learning within the lantern of Aristotle's brains."<sup>6</sup> But in the whole preface there is only one, and that a conventional, expression of belief in the Christian dogma of salvation; and as to that we may note his own words: "We are all in effect become comedians in religion."<sup>7</sup> Still, untruthful as he certainly was,<sup>8</sup> we may take him as a convinced theist of the experiential school, standing at the ordinary position of the deists of the next century.

Notably enough, he anticipates the critical position of Hume as

<sup>1</sup> Art. RALEIGH, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, xlvii, 192.  
<sup>2</sup> Report in 1736 ed. of *History of the World*, p. ccxlix. "Harpool" seems an error for Harriott. Cp. Edwards, *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, 1868, i, 432, 436. It is after naming "Harpool" that the judge says: "Let not any devil persuade you to think there is no eternity in heaven."

<sup>3</sup> Ed. cited, p. xxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Id. p. xxiv.

<sup>6</sup> Id. p. xvi.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Gardiner, *History of England, 1603-1642*, 10-vol. ed. i, 132-35; iii, 150, 152.

to reason and experience: "That these and these be the causes of these and these effects, time hath taught us and not reason; and so hath experience without art."<sup>1</sup> Such utterance, if not connected with professions of piety, might in those days give rise to such charges of unbelief as were so freely cast at him. But the charges seem to have been in large part mere expressions of the malignity which religion so normally fosters, and which can seldom have been more bitter than then. Raleigh is no admirable type of rectitude; but he can hardly have been a worse man than his orthodox enemies. And we must estimate such men in full view of the low standards of their age.

The belief about Raleigh's atheism was so strong that we have Archbishop Abbot writing to Sir Thomas Roe on Feb. 19, 1618-1619, that Raleigh's end was due to his "questioning" of "God's being and omnipotence." It is asserted by Francis Osborn, who had known Raleigh, that he got his title of *Atheist* from Queen Elizabeth. See the preface (*Author to Reader*) to Osborn's *Miscellany of Sundry Essays*, etc., in 7th ed. of his *Works*, 1673. As to atheism at Elizabeth's court see J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of England*, 2nd ed. p. 198, and ref. Lilly makes one of his characters write of the ladies at court that "they never jar about matters of religion, because they never mean to reason of them" (*Euphues*, Arber's ed. p. 194).

A curious use was made of Raleigh's name and fame after his death for various purposes. In 1620 or 1621 appeared "*Vox Spiritus*, or Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost; a Conference between Signr. Gondamier.....and Father Bauldwine"—a "seditious" tract by one Captain Gainsford. It appears to have been reprinted in 1622 as "*Prosopoeia*. Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost." Then in 1626 came a new treatise, "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost, or England's Forewarner," published in 1626 at Utrecht by Thomas Scott, an English minister there, who was assassinated in the same year. The title having thus had vogue, there was published in 1631 "*Rawleigh's Ghost*, or, a Feigned Apparition of Syr Walter Rawleigh to a friend of his, for the translating into English the Booke of Leonard Lessius (that most learned man), entituled *De Providentia Numinis et animi immortalitate*, written against the Atheists and Politicians of these days." The translation of a Jesuit's treatise (1613) thus accredited purports to be by "A. B." In a reprint of 1651 the "feigned" disappears from the title-page; but "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost" remains to attract readers; and the translation, now purporting to be by John Holden, who claims to

<sup>1</sup> Ed. cited, p. xxii.



have been a friend of Raleigh's, is dedicated to his son Carew. In the preface the Ghost adjures the translator (who professes to have heard him frequently praise the treatise of Lessius) to translate the work with Raleigh's name on the title, so as to clear his memory of "a foul and most unjust aspersion of me for my presumed denial of a deity."

The latest documentary evidence as to the case of Marlowe is produced by Mr. F. S. Boas in his article, "New Light on Marlowe and Kyd," in the *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1899, reproduced in his edition of the works of Thomas Kyd (Clarendon Press, 1901). In addition to the formerly known data as to Marlowe's "atheism," it is now established that Thomas Kyd, his fellow dramatist, was arrested on the same charge, and that there was found among his papers one containing "vile hereticall conceiptes denyinge the divinity of Jhesus Christe our Saviour." This Kyd declared he had had from Marlowe, denying all sympathy with its view. *Nevertheless, he was put to the torture.* The paper, however, proves to be a vehement Unitarian argument on Scriptural grounds, and is much more likely to have been written by Francis Kett than by Marlowe. In the MSS. now brought to light, one Cholmeley, who "confessed that he was persuaded by Marlowe's reasons to become an Atheiste," is represented by a spy as speaking "all evil of the Counsell, saying that they are all Atheistes and Machiavillians, especially my Lord Admirall." The same "atheist," who imputes atheism to others as a vice, is described as regretting he had not killed the Lord Treasurer, "sayenge that he could never have done God better service."

For the rest, the same spy tells that Cholmeley believed Marlowe was "able to shewe more sound reasons for Atheisme than any devine in Englande is able to geve to prove devinitie, and that Marloe told him that he hath read the Atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others." On the last point there is no further evidence, save that Sir Walter, his dependent Thomas Harriott, and Mr. Carewe Rawley, were on March 21, 1593-1594, charged upon sworn testimonies with holding "impious opinions concerning God and Providence." There was, however, no prosecution. Harriott had published in 1588 a work on his travels in Virginia, at the close of which is a passage in the devoutest vein telling of his missionary labours (quoted by Mr. Boas, art. cited, p. 225). Yet by 1592 he had, with his master, a reputation for atheism; and that it was not wholly on the strength of his great scientific knowledge is suggested by the statement of Anthony à Wood that he "made a philosophical theology, wherein he cast off the Old Testament."

Of this no trace remains; but it is established that he was a highly accomplished mathematician, much admired by Kepler;

and that he "applied the telescope to celestial purposes almost simultaneously with Galileo" (art. HARRIOTT in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*; cp. art. in *Encyc. Brit.*). "Harriott.....was the first who dared to say  $A=B$  in the form  $A-B=O$ , one of the greatest sources of progress ever opened in algebra" (Prof. A. De Morgan, *Newton, his Friend and his Niece*, 1885, p. 91). Further, he improved algebraic notation by the use of small italic letters in place of Roman capitals, and threw out the hypothesis of secondary planets as well as of stars invisible from their size and distance. "He was the first to verify the results of Galileo." Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, pp. 126, 168. Cp. Rigaud, as cited by Powell; Ellis's notes on Bacon, in Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 674-76; and Storojenko, as above cited, p. 38, note.

Against the aspersion of Harriott at Raleigh's trial may be cited the high panegyric of Chapman, who terms him "my admired and soul-loved friend, master of all essential and true knowledge,"<sup>1</sup> and one "whose judgment and knowledge, in all kinds, I know to be incomparable and bottomless, yea, to be admired as much as his most blameless life, and the right sacred expense of his time, is to be honoured and revered"; with a further "affirmation of his clear unmatchedness in all manner of learning."<sup>2</sup>

The frequency of such traces of rationalism at this period is to be understood in the light of the financial and other scandals of the Reformation; the bitter strifes of Church and dissent; and the horrors of the wars of religion in France, concerning which Bacon remarks in his essay *Of Unity in Religion* that the spectacle would have made Lucretius "seven times more Epicure and atheist than he was." The proceedings against Raleigh and Kyd, accordingly, did not check the spread of the private avowal of unbelief. A few years later we find Hooker, in the Fifth Book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity* (1597), bitterly declaring that the unbelievers in the higher tenets of religion are much strengthened by the strifes of believers;<sup>3</sup> as a dozen years earlier Bishop Pilkington told of "young whelps" who "in corners make themselves merry with railing and scoffing at the holy scriptures."<sup>4</sup> And in the *Treatise of the Nature of God*, by Bishop Thomas Morton (1599), a quasi-dialogue in which the arguing is all on one side, the passive interlocutor indicates, in the process of repudiating them, a full acquaintance with the pleas of those who "would openly profess themselves to be of that [the

<sup>1</sup> Title of verses appended to trans. of *Achilles Shield*, 1598. Chapman spells the name Harriots.

<sup>2</sup> Pref. to complete trans. of *Iliad*.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. v, ch. ii, §§ 1-4. *Works*, ed. 1850, i, 432-36.

<sup>4</sup> *Exposition upon Nehemiah* (1585) in Parker Soc. ed. of *Works*, 1842, p. 401.



atheistic] judgment, and as far as they might without danger defend it by argument against any whatever." The pleas include the lack of moral control in the world, the evidences of natural causation, the varieties of religious belief, and the contradictions of Scripture. And such atheists, we are told, "make nature their God."<sup>1</sup>

From Hooker's account also it is clear that, at least with comparatively patient clerics like himself, the freethinkers would at times deliberately press the question of theism, and avow the conviction that belief in God was "a kind of harmless error, bred and confirmed by the sleights of wiser men." He further notes with even greater bitterness that some—an "execrable crew"—who were themselves unbelievers, would in the old pagan manner argue for the fostering of religion as a matter of State policy, herein conning the lesson of Machiavelli. For his own part Hooker was confessedly ill-prepared to debate with the atheists, and his attitude was not fitted to shake their opinions. His one resource is the inevitable plea that atheists are such for the sake of throwing off all moral restraint<sup>2</sup>—a theorem which could hardly be taken seriously by those who knew the history of the English and French aristocracies, Protestant and Catholic, for the past hundred years. Hooker's own measure of rationalism, though remarkable as compared with previous orthodoxy, went no further than the application of the argument of Pecoek that reason must guide and control all resort to Scripture and authority;<sup>3</sup> and he came to it under stress of dispute, as a principle of accommodation for warring believers, not as an expression of any independent skepticism. When his pious antagonist Travers cited him as saying that "his best author was his own reason"<sup>4</sup> he was prompt to reply that he meant "true, sound, divine reason;.....reason proper to that science whereby the things of God are known; theological reason, which out of principles in Scripture that are plain, soundly deduceth more doubtful inferences."<sup>5</sup> Of the application of rational criticism to Scriptural claims he had no idea. The unbelievers of his day were for him a frightful portent, menacing all his plans of orthodox toleration; and he would have had them put down by force—a course which in some cases, as we have seen, had in that age been actually taken, and was always apt to be resorted to. But orthodoxy all the while had a sure support in the social and political conditions which made impossible the publication

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, pp. 8-11, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Eccles. Pol.* bk. i, ch. vii; bk. ii, ch. i, vii; bk. iii, ch. viii, § 16; bk. v, ch. viii; bk. vii, ch. xi; bk. viii, § 6 (*Works*, i, 165, 231, 300, 446; ii, 388, 537). See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. iii, 341-42; 1-vol. ed. pp. 193-94.

<sup>3</sup> *Supplication of Travers*, in Hooker's *Works*, ed. 1850, ii, 662.

<sup>4</sup> *Answer to Travers*, *id.* p. 693.

<sup>5</sup> *Works*, i, 432; ii, 762-63.

of rationalistic opinions. While the whole machinery of public doctrine remained in religious hands or under ecclesiastical control, the mass of men of all grades inevitably held by the traditional faith. What is remarkable is the amount of unbelief, either privately explicit or implicit in the higher literature, of which we have trace.

Above all there remains the great illustration of the rationalistic spirit of the English literary renaissance of the sixteenth century—the drama of SHAKESPEARE. Of that it may confidently be said that every attempt to find for it a religious foundation has failed.<sup>1</sup> Gervinus, while oddly suggesting that "in not only not seeking a reference to religion in his works, but in systematically avoiding it even when opportunity offered," Shakespeare was keeping clear of an embroilment with the clergy, nevertheless pronounces the plays to be wholly secular in spirit. While contending that "in action the religious and divine in man is nothing else than the moral," the German critic admits that Shakespeare "wholly discarded from his works.....that which religion enjoins as to faith and opinion."<sup>2</sup> And, while refusing the inference of positive unbelief on the poet's part, he pronounces that, "Just as Bacon banished religion from science, so did Shakespeare from art.....From Bacon's example it seems clear that Shakespeare left religious matters unnoticed on the same grounds."<sup>3</sup> The latest and weightiest criticism comes to the same conclusion; and it is only on presupposition that any other can be reached. One of the ablest of Shakespearean critics sums up that "the Elizabethan drama was almost wholly secular; and while Shakespeare was writing he practically confined his view to the world of non-theological observation and thought, so that he represents it in substantially one and the same way whether the period of the story is pre-Christian or Christian."

[Prof. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 2nd ed. p. 25. In the concluding pages of his lecture on *Hamlet*, Professor Bradley slightly modifies this statement, suggesting that the ghost is made to appear as "the representative of the hidden ultimate power, the messenger of divine justice" (p. 174). Here, it seems to the present writer, Professor Bradley obtrudes the chief error of his admirable book—the constant implication that Shakespeare planned his plays as moral wholes. The fact is that he found the ghost an integral part of the old play which he rewrote; and in making it, in Professor Bradley's words,

<sup>1</sup> Some typical attempts of the kind are discussed in the author's two lectures on *The Religion of Shakespeare*, 1887 (South Place Institute).

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare Commentaries*, Eng. tr. 1863, ii, 618-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ii, 586.



"so majestic a phantom," he was simply heightening the character as he does others in the play, and as was his habit in the presentment of a king. In his volume of lectures entitled *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), Professor Bradley goes more fully into the problem of Shakespeare's religion. Here he somewhat needlessly obscures the issue by contending (p. 349) that it is preposterous to suppose that Shakespeare was "an ardent and devoted atheist or Brownist or Roman Catholic," and makes the most of the poet's sympathetic treatment of religious types and religious sentiments; but still sums up that he "was not, in the distinctive sense of the word, a religious man," and that "all was, for him, in the end, mystery" (p. 353).]

This perhaps somewhat understates the case. The Elizabethan drama was not wholly secular;<sup>1</sup> and certainly the dramatists individually were not. Peele's *David and Bethsabe* is wholly Biblical in theme, and, though sensual in sentiment, substantially orthodox in spirit; and elsewhere he has many passages of Protestant and propagandist fervour.<sup>2</sup> Greene and Lodge give a highly Scriptural ring to their *Looking-Glass for London*; and Lodge, who uses religious expressions freely in his early treatise, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*,<sup>3</sup> later translated Josephus. Kyd in *Arden of Feversham*<sup>4</sup> accepts the Christian view at the close, though *The Spanish Tragedy* is pagan; and the pre-Shakespearean *King Leir and his Three Daughters* (1594), probably the work of Kyd and Lodge, has long passages of specifically Christian sentiment. Nashe, again, was a hot religious controversialist despite his Bohemian habits and his indecorous vein; Greene on his repentant deathbed was profusely censorious of atheism;<sup>5</sup> Lilly, as we have seen, is combatively theistic in his *Campaspe*; while Jonson, as we shall see, girds at skeptics in *Volpone* and *The Magnetick Lady*, and further wrote a quantity of devotional verse. Even the "atheist" Marlowe, as we saw, puts theistic sentiment into the mouth of his "atheist Tamburlaine"; and of *Doctor Faustus*, despite incidental heresy, the *dénouement* is religiously orthodox. Thomas Heywood may even be pronounced a religious man,<sup>6</sup> as he was certainly a strong Protestant,<sup>7</sup> though an anti-Puritan; and his prose treatise *The*

<sup>1</sup> In the last edition I had written to that effect; but I have modified the opinion.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion to "popish ceremonies" in *Titus Andronicus* is probably from his hand. See the author's work, *Did Shakespeare Write "Titus Andronicus"?*, where it is argued that the play in question is substantially Peele's and Greene's.

<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare Soc. rep. 1853, pp. 14, 16-17, 18, 24, 28, etc.

<sup>4</sup> This has been shown to be his by Fleay and Mr. Crawford.

<sup>5</sup> See his *Groatworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the Jane Shore portions of his *Edward IV* with the close of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Note also the conclusion of *The English Traveller*.

<sup>7</sup> See the poem *England's Elizabeth*, 1631.

*Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* (1635) exhibits a religious temperament. The same may be said of Dekker, who is recorded to have written at least the prologue and the epilogue for a play on Pontius Pilate,<sup>1</sup> and is believed to be the author of the best scenes in *The Virgin Martyr*, in which he collaborated with Massinger. He too uses supererogatory religious expressions,<sup>2</sup> and shows his warm Protestantism in *The Whore of Babylon*, as he does his general religious sentiment in his treatise *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Chapman was certainly a devout theist, and probably a Christian. In the "domestic" tragedy, *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), which is conjecturally ascribed to Lodge, the conclusion is on Christian lines, as in *Arden*; and the same holds of *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Dekker and others. Of none of these dramatists could it be said, on the mere strength of his work, that he was "agnostic," though Marlowe was certainly a freethinker. The others were, first or last, avowedly religious. Shakespeare, and Shakespeare alone, after Marlowe, is persistently non-religious in his handling of life. *Lear*, his darkest tragedy, is predominantly pagan; and *The Tempest*, in its serener vein, is no less so. But indeed all the genuine plays alike ignore or tacitly negate the idea of immortality; even the conventional religious phrases of Macbeth being but incidental poetry.

In the words of a clerical historian, "the religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his work are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. And on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant.....The riddle of life and death.....he leaves.....a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him."<sup>3</sup> The practical wisdom in which he rose above his rivals no less than in dramatic and poetic genius, kept him prudently reticent on his opinions, as it set him upon building his worldly fortunes while the others with hardly an exception lived in shallows and miseries. As so often happens, it was among the ill-balanced types that there was found the heedless courage to cry aloud what others thought; but Shakespeare's significant silence reminds us that the largest spirits

<sup>1</sup> Henslowe's Diary, ed. Greg, i, fol. 96.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., the lines,

The best of men  
That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed,

at the close of Part I of *The Honest Whore*; and the phrase, "Heaven's great arithmetician," at the close of *Old Fortunatus*.

<sup>3</sup> Green, *Short Hist.* ch. vii, § 7 end. Cp. Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, Lect. iii, § 115.



of all could live in disregard of contemporary creeds. For, while there is no record of his having privately avowed unbelief, and certainly no explicit utterance of it in his plays,<sup>1</sup> in no genuine work of his is there any more than bare dramatic conformity to current habits of religious speech; and there is often significantly less. In *Measure for Measure* the Duke, counselling as a friar the condemned Claudio, discusses the ultimate issues of life and death without a hint of Christian credence.

So silent is the dramatist on the ecclesiastical issues of his day that Protestants and Catholics are enabled to go on indefinitely claiming him as theirs; the latter dwelling on his generally kindly treatment of friars; the former citing the fact that some Protestant preacher—evidently a protégé of his daughter Susannah—was allowed lodging at his house. But the preacher was not very hospitably treated;<sup>2</sup> and other clues fail. There is good reason to think that Shakespeare was much influenced by Montaigne's Essays, read by him in Florio's translation, which was issued when he was recasting the old *Hamlet*; and the whole treatment of life in the great tragedies and serious comedies produced by him from that time forward is even more definitely untheological than Montaigne's own doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Nor can he be supposed to have disregarded the current disputes as to fundamental beliefs, implicating as they did his fellow-dramatists Marlowe, Kyd, and Greene. The treatise of De Mornay, of which Sir Philip Sidney began and Arthur Golding finished the translation,<sup>4</sup> was in his time widely circulated in England; and its very inadequate argumentation might well strengthen in him the anti-theological leaning.

A serious misconception has been set up as to Shakespeare's cast of mind by the persistence of editors in including among his works without discrimination plays which are certainly not his, as the *Henry VI* group, to which he contributed little, and in particular the First Part, of which he wrote probably nothing. It is on the assumption that that play is Shakespeare's work that Lecky (*Rationalism in Europe*, ed. 1887, i, 105-106) speaks of "that melancholy picture of Joan of Arc which is perhaps the darkest blot upon his genius." Now, whatever passages Shakespeare may have contributed to the Second and Third Parts, it is certain that he has barely a scene in the First, and

<sup>1</sup> The old work of W. J. Birch, M.A., *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare* (1848), is an unjudicial *ex parte* statement of the case for Shakespeare's unbelief; but it is worth study.

<sup>2</sup> The town paid for his bread and wine, no doubt by way of compliment.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the author's *Montaigne and Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. sec. viii.

<sup>4</sup> *A Woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian Religion*, 1587. Reprinted in 1592, 1604, and 1617.

that there is not a line from his hand in the La Pucelle scenes. Many students think that Dr. Furnivall has even gone too far in saying that "the only part.....to be put down to Shakespeare is the Temple Garden scene of the red and white roses" (Introd. to *Leopold Shakespeare*, p. xxxviii); so little is there to suggest even the juvenile Shakespeare there. (The high proportion of double-endings is a ground for reckoning it a late sample of Marlowe, who in his posthumously published translation of Lucan had approached that proportion. Cp. the author's vol. on *Titus Andronicus*, p. 190.) But that any critical and qualified reader can still hold him to have written the worst of the play is unintelligible. The whole work would be a "blot on his genius" in respect of its literary weakness. The doubt was raised long before Lecky wrote, and was made good a generation ago. When Lecky further proceeds, with reference to the witches in *Macbeth*, to say (*id. note*) that it is "probable that Shakespeare.....believed with an unfaltering faith in the reality of witchcraft," he strangely misreads that play. Nothing is clearer than that it grounds Macbeth's action from the first in Macbeth's own character and his wife's, employing the witch machinery (already used by Middleton) to meet the popular taste, but never once making the witches really causal forces. An "unfaltering" believer in witchcraft who wrote for the stage would surely have turned it to serious account in other tragedies. This Shakespeare never does. On Lecky's view, he is to be held as having believed in the fairy magic of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, and in the actuality of such episodes as that of the ghost in *Macbeth*. But who for a moment supposes him to have had any such belief? It is probable that the entire undertaking of *Macbeth* (1605?) and later of the *Tempest* (1610?) was due to a wish on the part of the theatre management to please King James, whose belief in witchcraft and magic was notorious. Even the use of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is an old stage expedient, common to the pre-Shakespearean play and to others of Kyd's and Peele's. Shakespeare significantly altered the dying words of Hamlet from the "heaven receive my soul" of the old version to "the rest is silence." The bequest of his soul to the Deity in his will is merely the regulation testamentary formula of the time. In his sonnets, which hint his personal cast if anything does, there is no real trace of religious creed or feeling. And it is clearly the hand of Fletcher, a no less sensual writer than Peele, that penned the part of Henry VIII in which occurs the Protestant tag: "In her [Elizabeth's] days.....God shall be truly known."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As to the expert analysis of this play, which shows it to be in large part Fletcher's, see Furnivall, as cited, pp. xciii-xcvi.



While, however, Shakespeare is notably naturalistic as compared with the other Elizabethan dramatists, it remains true that their work in the mass tells little of a habitually religious way of thinking. Apart from the plays above named, and from polemic passages and devotional utterances outside their plays, they hint as little of Christian dogma as of Christian asceticism. Hence, in fact, the general and bitter hostility of the Puritans to the stage. Even at and after Shakespeare's death, the drama is substantially "graceless." Jonson, who was for a time a Catholic, but reverted to the Church of England, disliked the Puritans, and in *Bartholomew Fair* derides them. The age did not admit of a pietistic drama; and when there was a powerful pietistic public, it made an end of drama altogether. To Elizabeth's reign probably belongs the *Atheist's Tragedy* of Cyril Tourneur, first published in 1611, but evidently written in its author's early youth—a coarse and worthless performance, full of extremely bad imitations of Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup> But to the age of Elizabeth also belongs, perhaps, the sententious tragedy of *Mustapha* by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, first surreptitiously published in 1609. A century and a half later the deists were fond of quoting<sup>2</sup> the concluding *Chorus Sacerdotum*, beginning:

O wearisome condition of humanity,  
Born under one law, to another bound;  
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity;  
Created sick, commanded to be sound:  
If nature did not take delight in blood,  
She would have made more easy ways to good.

It is natural to suspect that the author of such lines was less orthodox than his own day had reputed him; and yet the whole of his work shows him much pre-occupied with religion, though perhaps in a deistic spirit. But Brooke's introspective and undramatic poetry is an exception: the prevailing colour of the whole drama of the Shakespearean period is pre-Puritan and semi-pagan; and the theological spirit of the next generation, intensified by King James, was recognized by cultured foreigners as a change for the worse.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of free learning for the time was gone, expelled by theological rancours; and when Selden ventured in his *History of Tythes* (1618) to apply the method of dispassionate historical criticism to ecclesiastical matters he was compelled to make a formal retractation.<sup>4</sup> Early Protestants had attacked, as a

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Seccombe and Allen, *The Age of Shakspeare*, 1903, ii, 189.

<sup>2</sup> Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Britannien*, Hanover, 1752, ii, 429. Alberti reads "God" at the end of the passage; I follow Grosart's edition.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, *Lit. Europe*, ii, 371, 376; Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 2nd ed. p. 286 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Pattison, as cited, p. 290; G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 56-70.

papal superstition, the doctrine that tithes were levied *jure divino*: Protestants had now come to regard as atheistic the hint that tithes were levied otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

Not that rationalism became extinct. The "Italianate" incredulity as to a future state, which Sir John Davies had sought to repel by his poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), can hardly have been overthrown even by that remarkable production, which in the usual orthodox way pronounces all doubters to be "light and vicious persons," who, "though they would, cannot quite be beasts."<sup>2</sup> And there were other forms of doubt. In 1602 appeared *The Unmasking of the Politique Atheist*, by J. H. [John Hull], *Batchelor of Divinitie*, which, however, is in the main a mere attempt to retort upon Catholics the charge of atheism laid by them against Protestants. Soon after, in 1605, we find Dr. John Dove producing a *Confutation of Atheisme* in the manner of previous continental treatises, making the word "atheism" cover many shades of theism; and an essayist writing in 1608 asserts that, on account of the self-seeking and corruption so common among churchmen, "prophane Atheisme hath taken footing in the hearts of ignorant and simple men."<sup>3</sup> The orthodox Ben Jonson, in his *Volpone* (1607), puts in the mouth of a fool<sup>4</sup> the lines:—

And then, for your religion, profess none,  
But wonder at the diversity of all;  
And, for your part, protest, were there no other  
But simply the laws o' th' land, you would content you.  
Nic Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin both  
Were of this mind.

But the testimony is not the less significant; as is the account in *The Magnetick Lady* (1632) of

A young physician to the family  
That, letting God alone, ascribes to Nature  
More than her share; licentious in discourse,  
And in his life a profest voluptuary.<sup>5</sup>

Such statements of course prove merely a frequent coolness towards religion, not a vogue of reasoned unbelief. But the existence of rationalizing heresy is attested by the burning of two men, Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman, for avowing Unitarian views, in 1612. These, the last executions for heresy in England, were results of the theological zeal of King James,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs* cited, pp. 60-61. On the whole question see the *Review* appended by Selden to his *History* after a few copies had been distributed.

<sup>2</sup> *Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Grosart, 1876, i, 82, 83.

<sup>3</sup> *Essaies Politicke and Morall*, by D. T. Gent, 1608, fol. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Act iv, sc. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Act i, sc. 1. Jonson himself could have been so indicted on the strength of certain verses.



stimulated by the Calvinistic fanaticism of Archbishop Abbot, the predecessor of Laud.

James's career as a persecutor began characteristically in a meddlesome attack upon a professor in Holland. A German theologian of Socinian leanings, named Conrad Vorstius, professor at Steinfurth, had produced in 1606 a somewhat heretical treatise, *De Deo*, but had nevertheless been appointed in 1610 professor of theology at Leyden, in succession to Arminius. It was his acceptance of Arminian views, joined with his repute as a scholar,<sup>1</sup> that secured him the invitation, which was given without the knowledge that at a previous period he had been offered a similar appointment by the Socinians. In his *Anti-Bellarminus contractus*, "a brief refutation of the four tomes of Bellarmin," he had taken the Arminian line, repudiating the Calvinist positions which, in the opinion of Arminius, could not be defended against the Catholic attack. But he was too speculative and ratiocinative to be safe in an age in which the fear of spreading Socinianism and the hate of Calvinists towards Arminianism had set up a reign of terror. Vorstius was both "unsettling" and heterodox. His opinions were "such as in our own day would certainly disqualify him from holding such an office in any Christian University";<sup>2</sup> and James, worked upon by Abbot, went so far as to make the appointment of Vorstius a diplomatic question. The stadhouder Maurice and the bulk of the Dutch clergy being of his view, the more tolerant statesmen of Holland, and the mercantile aristocracy, yielded from motives of prudence, and Vorstius was dismissed in order to save the English alliance. Remaining thenceforth without employment, he was further denounced in 1619 by the Synod of Dort, and banished by the States General. Thereafter he lived for two years in hiding; and soon after obtaining a refuge in Holstein, died, worn out by his troubles. In England, meantime, James drew up with his own hands a catalogue of the heresies found by him in Vorstius's treatise, and caused the book to be burned in London and at the two Universities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He had been offered professorships of divinity at Saumur and Marburg.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, *History of England, 1603-1642*, 4th ed. ii, 128. Cp. Bayle, art. VORSTIUS, Note N. By his theological opponents and by James, Vorstius was of course called an atheist. He was in reality not a Socinian, but a "strict Arian, who believed that the Son of God was at first created by the Father, and then delegated to create the universe—a sort of inferior deity, who was nevertheless entitled to religious homage" (James Nichols, note to App. P. on Brandt's *Life of Arminius* in *Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 218). Nichols gives a full survey of the subject, pp. 202-237. Fuller (*Ch. Hist.* B. x, cent. 17, sec. iv, §§ 1-5) tells the story, and pronounces the opinions of Vorstius "fitter to be remanded to hell than committed to writing."

<sup>3</sup> Bayle (art. cited, Note F) says both Universities, as does Fuller. At the Synod of Dort, however, the British representatives read only, it seems, a decree (dated Sept. 21, 1611) of the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, ordering the burning of the book there. (Nichols, *Account of the Synod of Dort*, in *Works of Arminius*, i, 497).

On the heels of this amazing episode came the cases of Wightman and Legate. Finding, in a personal conversation, that Legate had "ceased to pray to Christ," the King had him brought before the Bishop of London's Consistory Court, which sentenced the heretic to Newgate. Being shortly released, he had the imprudence to threaten an action for false imprisonment, whereupon he was re-arrested. Chief Justice Coke held that, technically, the Consistory Court could not sentence to burning; but Hobart and Bacon, the law officers of the Crown, and other judges, were of opinion that it could. Legate, accordingly, was duly tried, sentenced, and burned at Smithfield; and Wightman a few days later was similarly disposed of at Lichfield.<sup>1</sup>

Bacon's share in this matter is obscure, and has not been discussed by either his assailants or his vindicators. As for the general public, the historian records that "not a word was uttered against this horrible cruelty. As we read over the brief contemporary notices which have reached us, we look in vain for the slightest intimation that the death of these two men was regarded with any other feelings than those with which the writers were accustomed to hear of the execution of an ordinary murderer. If any remark was made, it was in praise of James for the devotion which he showed to the cause of God."<sup>2</sup> That might have been reckoned on. It was not twenty years since Hamond, Lewis, Cole, and Kett had been burned on similar grounds; and there had been no outcry then. For generations "direness" had been too familiar to men's thoughts to admit of their being shocked by a judicial murder or two the more. Catholic priests had been executed by the score: why not a pair of Unitarians?<sup>3</sup> Little had gone on in the average intellectual life in the interim save religious discussion and Bibliolatry, and not from such culture could there come any growth of human kindness or any clearer conception of the law of reciprocity. But, whether by force of recoil from a revival of the fires of Smithfield or from a perception that mere cruelty did not avail to destroy heresy, the theological *ultima ratio* was never again resorted to on English ground.

Though no public protest was made, the retrospective Fuller

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, pp. 129-30. Fuller (as last cited, §§ 6-14) gives a list of Legate's "damnable tenets." See it in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Gardiner, as cited. Fuller is cheerfully acquiescent, though he notes the private demurs, which he denounces. "God," he says, "may seem well pleased with this seasonable severity."

<sup>3</sup> In 1580 Stow records how one Randall was put on trial for "conjuring to know where treasure was hid in the earth and goods feloniously taken were become"; and four others were tried "for being present." Four were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Randall was executed, and the others reprieved. (Ed. 1615, p. 688.)



testifies that "such burning of heretics much startled common people, pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the novelty (!) and hideousness of the punishment."<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that within a few years of the burning of Legate and Wightman there appeared quite a cluster of treatises explicitly contending for toleration. In 1614 came *Religion's Peace: or, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, by Leonard Busher, the first English book of the kind. In 1615 came *Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned*; and in 1620 *An Humble Supplication to the King's Majesty*, pressing the same doctrine.<sup>2</sup> There is no record of any outcry over these works, though they are tolerably freespoken in their indictment of the coercive school; and they had all to be reprinted a generation later, their point having never been carried; but it may be surmised that their appeal, which is substantially well reasoned from a secular as well as from a theological point of view, had something to do with the abandonment of persecution unto death. Even King James, in opening the Parliament of 1614, professed to recognize that no religion or heresy was ever extirpated by violence.

That an age of cruel repression of heresy had promoted unbelief is clear from the *Atheomastix* of Bishop Fotherby (1622), which notes among other things that as a result of constant disputing "the Scriptures (with many) have lost their authority, and are thought onely fit for the ignorant and idiote."<sup>3</sup> On this head the bishop attempts no answer; and on his chosen theme he is perhaps the worst of all apologists. His admission that there can be no a priori proof of deity<sup>4</sup> may be counted to him for candour; but the childishness of his reasoning a posteriori excludes the ascription of philosophic insight. He does but use the old pseudo-arguments of universal consent and design, with the simple device of translating polytheistic terms into monotheistic. All the while he makes the usual suggestions that there are few or no atheists to convert, and these not worth converting—this at a folio's length. The book tells only of difficulties evaded by vociferation. And while the growing stress of the strife between the ecclesiasticism of the Crown and the forces of nonconformity more and more thrust to the front religious-political issues, there began alongside of those strifes the new and

<sup>1</sup> Fuller actually alleges that "there was none ever after that openly avowed these heretical doctrines"—an unintelligible figment.

<sup>2</sup> All reprinted in 1846 for the Hanserd Knollys Society, with histor. introd. by E. B. Underhill, in the vol. *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution, 1614-1661*. They do not speak of Legate or Wightman.

<sup>3</sup> *Atheomastix*, 1622, pref. Sig. B. 3, verso. The work was posthumous and incomplete.

<sup>4</sup> Bk. i, ch. i, p. 5.

powerful propaganda of deism, which, beginning with the Latin treatise, *De Veritate*, of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1624), was gradually to leaven English thought for over a century.

Further, there now came into play the manifold influence of FRANCIS BACON, whose case illustrates perhaps more fully than any other the difficulties, alike external and internal, in the way of right thinking. Taken as a whole, his work is on account of those difficulties divided against itself, insisting as he does alternately on a strict critical method and on the subjection of reason to the authority of revelation. He sounds a trumpet-call to a new and universal effort of free and circumspect intelligence; and on the instant he stipulates for the prerogative of Scripture. Though only one of many who assailed alike the methodic tyranny of Aristotelianism<sup>1</sup> and the methodless empiricism of the ordinary "scientific" thought of the past, he made his attack with a sustained and manifold force of insight and utterance which still entitles him to pre-eminence as the great critic of wrong methods and the herald of better. Yet he not only transgresses often his own principal precepts in his scientific reasoning; he falls below several of his contemporaries and predecessors in respect of his formal insistence on the final supremacy of theology over reason, alike in physics and in ethics. Where Hooker is ostensibly seeking to widen the field of rational judgment on the side of creed, Bacon, the very champion of mental emancipation in the abstract, declares the boundary to be fixed.

Of those lapses from critical good faith, part of the explanation is to be found in the innate difficulty of vital innovation for all intelligences; part in the special pressures of the religious environment. On the latter head Bacon makes such frequent and emphatic protest that we are bound to infer on his part a personal experience in his own day of the religious hostility which long followed his memory. "Generally," he wrote of himself in one fragment, "he perceived in men of devout simplicity this opinion, that the secrets of nature were the secrets of God, and part of that glory whereinto the mind of man if it seek to press shall be oppressed;.....and on the other side, in men of a devout policy he noted an inclination to have the people depend upon God the more when they are less acquainted with second causes, and to have no stirring in philosophy, lest it may lead to innovation in divinity or else should discover

<sup>1</sup> In the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. i (Routledge ed. p. 54), he himself notes how, long before his time, the new learning had in part discredited the schoolmen.



matter of further contradiction to divinity"<sup>1</sup>—a summary of the whole early history of the resistance to science.<sup>2</sup> In the works which he wrote at the height of his powers, especially in his masterpiece, the *Novum Organum* (1620), where he comes closest to the problems of exact inquiry, he specifies again and again both popular superstition and orthodox theology as hindrances to scientific research, commenting on "those who out of faith and veneration mix their philosophy with theology and traditions,"<sup>3</sup> and declaring that of the drawbacks science had to contend with "the corruption of philosophy by superstition and an admixture of theology is far the more widely spread, and does the greatest harm, whether to entire systems or to their parts. For the human understanding is obnoxious to the influence of the imagination no less than to the influence of common notions."<sup>4</sup> In the same passage he exclaims at the "extreme levity" of those of the moderns who have attempted to "found a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, on the book of Job, and other parts of the sacred writings";<sup>5</sup> and yet again, coupling as obstinate adversaries of Natural Philosophy "superstition, and the blind and immoderate zeal of religion," he roundly affirms that "by the simpleness of certain divines access to any philosophy, however pure, is well nigh closed."<sup>6</sup> These charges are repeatedly salved by such claims as that "true religion" puts no obstacles in the way of science;<sup>7</sup> that the book of Job runs much to natural philosophy;<sup>8</sup> and, in particular, in the last book of the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, redacted after his disgrace, by the declaration—more emphatic than those of the earlier *Advancement of Learning*—that "Sacred Theology ought to be derived from the word and oracles of God, and not from the light of nature or the dictates of reason."<sup>9</sup> In this mood he goes so far as to declare, with the thorough-going obscurantists, that "the more discordant and incredible the divine mystery is, the more honour is shown to God in believing it, and the nobler is the victory of faith."

[It was probably such deliverances as these that led to the ascription to Bacon of *The Christian Paradoxes*, first published

<sup>1</sup> *Filum Labyrinthi*—an English version of the *Cogitata et Visa*—§ 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Huarte, cited above, p. 471.

<sup>3</sup> *Nov. Org.* bk. i, Aph. 62 (*Works*, Routledge ed. p. 271).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* Aph. 65.

<sup>5</sup> *Id. ib.* Cp. the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, and the *De Augmentis*, bk. ix, near end. (Ed. cited, pp. 173, 684.)

<sup>6</sup> *Nov. Org.* Aph. 89. Cp. Aph. 46, 49, 96; the *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; the English *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7; and the *De Principiis atque Originibus* (ed. cited, p. 650).

<sup>7</sup> *Valerius Terminus*, cap. i. (Ed. cited, p. 188.)

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 187; *Filum Labyrinthi*, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> Bk. ix, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 631.) Compare *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 186), and *De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. ii (p. 456), as to the impossibility of knowing the will and character of God from Nature, though (*De Aug.* last cit.) it reveals his power and glory.

(surreptitiously), without author's name, in 1645. As has been shown by Dr. Grosart (*Lord Bacon NOT the Author of "The Christian Paradoxes,"* 1865) that treatise was really by Herbert Palmer, B.D., who published it in full in part ii of his *Memorials of Godliness and Christianity*, 5th ed. 1655. The argument drawn from this treatise as to Bacon's skepticism is a twofold mystification. The *Paradoxes* are the deliberate declaration of a pietist that he believes the dogmas of revelation without rational comprehension. The style is plainly not Bacon's; but Bacon had said the same thing in the sentence quoted above. Dr. Grosart's explosive defence against the criticism of Ritter (work cited, p. 14) is an illustration of the intellectual temper involved.]

Yet even in the calculated extravagance of this last pronouncement there is a ground for question whether the fallen Chancellor, hoping to retrieve himself, and trying every device of his ripe sagacity to avert opposition, was not straining his formal orthodoxy beyond his real intellectual habit. As against such wholesale affirmation we have his declarations that "certain it is that God worketh nothing in nature but by second causes," and that any pretence to the contrary "is mere imposture as it were in favour towards God, and nothing else but to offer to the author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie";<sup>1</sup> his repeated objection to the discussion of Final Causes;<sup>2</sup> his attack on Plato and Aristotle for rejecting the atheistic scientific method of Democritus;<sup>3</sup> his peremptory assertion that motion is a property of matter;<sup>4</sup> and his almost Democritean handling of the final problem, in which he insists that primal matter is, "next to God, the cause of causes, itself only without a cause."<sup>5</sup> Further, though he speaks of Scriptural miracles in a conventional way,<sup>6</sup> he drily pronounces in one passage that, "as for narrations touching the prodigies and miracles of religions, they are either not true or not natural, and therefore impertinent for the story of nature."<sup>7</sup> Finally, as against the formal capitulation to theology at the close of the *De Augmentis*, he has left standing in the first book of the Latin version the ringing doctrine of the original *Advancement of Learning* (1605), that "there is no power on earth which setteth

<sup>1</sup> *Advancement*, bk. i (ed. cited, p. 45). Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 187).

<sup>2</sup> *Advancement*, bk. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, chs. iv and v; *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; *Novum Organum*, bk. i, Aph. 48; bk. ii, Aph. 2. (Ed. cited, pp. 96, 205, 266, 302, 471, 473.)

<sup>3</sup> *De Principiis atque Originibus*. (Ed. cited, pp. 649-50.) Elsewhere (*De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. iv, p. 471) he expressly puts it that the system of Democritus, which "removed God and mind from the structure of things," was more favourable to true science than the teleology and theology of Plato and Aristotle.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 651, 657.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 648.

<sup>6</sup> *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. ii; bk. iv, ch. ii. (Ed. cited, pp. 456, 482.)

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* bk. ii, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 423.)



up a throne or chair in the spirits and souls of men, and in their cogitations, imaginations, opinions, and beliefs, but knowledge and learning";<sup>1</sup> and in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*<sup>2</sup> he has contrived to turn a crude myth into a subtle allegory in behalf of toleration.

Thus, despite his many resorts to and prostrations before the Scriptures, the general effect of his writings in this regard is to set up in the minds of his readers the old semi-rationalistic equivoque of a "two-fold truth"; reminding us as they do that he "did in the beginning separate the divine testimony from the human." When, therefore, he announces that "we know by faith" that "matter was created from nothing,"<sup>3</sup> he has the air of juggling with his problem; and his further suggestion as to the possibility of matter being endowed with a force of evolution, however cautiously put, is far removed from orthodoxy. Accordingly, the charge of atheism—which he notes as commonly brought against all who dwell solely on second causes<sup>4</sup>—was actually cast at his memory in the next generation.<sup>5</sup> It was of course false: on the issue of theism he is continually descanting with quite conventional unction; as in the familiar essay on atheism.<sup>6</sup> His dismissal of final causes as "barren" meant merely that the notion was barren of scientific result;<sup>7</sup> and he refers the question to metaphysic.<sup>8</sup> But if his theism was of a kind disturbing to believers in a controlling Providence, as little was it satisfactory to Christian fervour: and it can hardly be doubted that the main stream of his argument made for a non-Biblical deism, if not for atheism; his dogmatic orthodoxies being undermined by his own scientific teaching.

Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 23–25) notes that Bacon involuntarily made for deism. Cp. Amand Saintes, *Hist. de la philos. de Kant*, 1844, p. 69; and Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, ch. xi, pp. 341–43. Dean Church (*Bacon*, in "Men of Letters" series, pp. 174, 205) insists that Bacon held by revelation and immortality; and can of course cite his profession of such belief, which is not to be disputed. (Cp. the careful judgment of Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, pp. 180–91, and his ed. of the *Novum Organum*, 1878, pp. 43–53.) But the tendency of the specific Baconian teaching is none the less to put these beliefs aside, and to overlay them with a naturalistic habit of mind. At the first remove from Bacon we have Hobbes.

<sup>1</sup> *De Augmentis*, ed. cited, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> No. xviii, *Diomedes*. Ed. cited, p. 841.

<sup>3</sup> *De Principiis atque Originibus*, p. 664.

<sup>4</sup> *Nov. Org.* i, 89: *Filum Labyrinthi*. § 7; Essay 16.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Osborn, pref. to his "Miscellany" in *Works*, 7th ed. 1673.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i.

<sup>7</sup> This is noted by Glassford in his tr. of the *Novum Organum* (1844, p. 26); and by Ellis in his and Spedding's edition of the *Works*. (Routledge ed. pp. 32, 473, note.)

<sup>8</sup> *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. iv, end.

As regards his intellectual inconsistencies, we can but say that they are such as meet us in men's thinking at every new turn. Though we can see that Bacon's orthodoxy "doth protest too much," with an eye on king and commons and public opinion, we are not led to suppose that he had ever in his heart cast off his inherited creed. He shows frequent Christian prejudice in his references to pagans; and can write that "To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but the bravery of the Stoics,"<sup>1</sup> pretending that the Christian books are more accommodating, and ignoring the Sermon on the Mount. In arguing that the "religion of the heathen" set men upon ending "all inquisition of nature in metaphysical or theological discourse," and in charging the Turks with a special tendency to "ascribe ordinary effects to the immediate workings of God,"<sup>2</sup> he is playing not very scrupulously on the vanity of his co-religionists. As he was only too well aware, both tendencies ruled the Christian thought of his own day, and derive direct from the sacred books—not from "abuse," as he pretends. And on the metaphysical as on the common-sense side of his thought he is self-contradictory, even as most men have been before and since, because judgment cannot easily fulfil the precepts it frames for itself in illuminated hours. Latter-day students have been impressed, as was Leibnitz, by the original insight with which Bacon negated the possibility of our forming any concrete conception of a primary form of matter, and insisted on its necessary transcendence of our powers of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> On the same principle he should have negated every modal conception of the still more recondite Something which he put as antecedent to matter, and called God.<sup>4</sup> Yet in his normal thinking he seems to have been content with the commonplace formula given in his essay on Atheism—that we cannot suppose the totality of things to be "without a mind." He has here endorsed in its essentials what he elsewhere calls "the heresy of the Anthropomorphites,"<sup>5</sup> failing to apply his own law in his philosophy, as elsewhere in his physics. When, however, we realize that similar inconsistency is fallen into after him by Spinoza, and wholly escaped perhaps by no thinker, we are in a way to understand that with all his deflections from his own higher law Bacon may have profoundly and fruitfully influenced the thought of the next generation, if not that of his own.

The fact of this influence has been somewhat obscured by the

<sup>1</sup> Essay 57, *Of Anger*.

<sup>2</sup> *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> *De Principiis*, ed. cited, pp. 648–49. Cp. pp. 642–43.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 648.

<sup>5</sup> *Valerius Terminus*, ch. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. v, ch. iv. Ed. cited, pp. 199, 517.



modern dispute as to whether he had any important influence on scientific progress.<sup>1</sup> At first sight the old claim for him in that regard seems to be heavily discounted by the simple fact that he definitely rejected the Copernican system of astronomy.<sup>2</sup> Though, however, this gravely emphasizes his fallibility, it does not cancel his services as a stimulator of scientific thought. At that time only a few were yet intelligently convinced Copernicans; and we have the record of how, in Bacon's day, Harvey lost heavily in credit and in his medical practice by propounding his discovery of the circulation of the blood,<sup>3</sup> which, it is said, no physician over forty years old at that time believed in. For the scientific men of that century—and only among them did Copernicanism find the slightest acceptance—it was thus no fatal shortcoming in Bacon to have failed to grasp the true scheme of sidereal motion, any more than it was in Galileo to be wrong about the tides and comets. They could realize that it was precisely in astronomy, for lack of special study and expert knowledge, that Bacon was least qualified to judge. Intellectual influence on science is not necessarily dependent on actual scientific achievement, though that of course furthers and establishes it; and the fact of Bacon's impact on the mind of the next age is abundantly proved by testimonies.

For a time the explicit tributes came chiefly from abroad; though at all times, even in the first shock of his disgrace, there were Englishmen perfectly convinced of his greatness. To the winning of foreign favour he had specially addressed himself in his adversity. Grown wary in act as well as wise in theory, he deleted from the Latin *De Augmentis* a whole series of passages of the *Advancement of Learning* which disparaged Catholics and Catholicism;<sup>4</sup> and he had his reward in being appreciated by many Jesuit and other Catholic scholars.<sup>5</sup> But Protestants such as Comenius and Leibnitz were ere long more emphatic than any Catholics;<sup>6</sup> and at the time of the Restoration we find Bacon enthusiastically praised among the more open-minded and scientifically biassed thinkers of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Brewster, *Life of Newton*, 1855, ii, 400-404; Draper, *Intel. Devel. of Europe*, ed. 1875, ii, 258-60; Dean Church, *Bacon*, pp. 180-201; Fowler, *Bacon*, ch. vi; Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, pp. 145-51; Lange, *Gesch. d. Materialismus*, i, 197 sq. (Eng. tr. i, 236-37), and cit. from Liebig—as to whom, however, see Fowler, pp. 133, 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Novum Organum*, ii, 46 and 48, § 17; *De Aug.* iii, 4; *Thema Coeli*. Ed. cited, pp. 364, 375, 461, 705, 709. Whewell (*Hist. of Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 296, 298) ignores the second and third of these passages in denying Hume's assertion that Bacon rejected the Copernican theory with "disdain." It is true, however, that Bacon had vacillated. The facts are fairly faced by Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, 1881, pp. 151-52, and his ed. of *Novum Organum*, introd. pp. 30-36. See also the summing-up of Ellis in notes to passages above cited, and at p. 675.

<sup>3</sup> Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Persons*, ed. 1813, vol. ii, pt. ii, p. 383.

<sup>4</sup> See notes in ed. cited, pp. 50, 53, 61, 63, 68, 75, 76, 84, 110.

<sup>5</sup> Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* § 14, pp. 101-104.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* § 14, p. 108; Ellis in ed. cited, p. 643.

England, who included some zealous Christians.<sup>1</sup> It was not that his special "method" enabled them to reach important results with any new facility; its impracticability is now insisted on by friends as well as foes.<sup>2</sup> It was that he arraigned with extraordinary psychological insight and brilliance of phrase the mental vices which had made discoveries so rare; the alternate self-complacency and despair of the average indolent mind; the "opinion of store" which was "cause of want"; the timid or superstitious evasion of research. In all this he was using his own highest powers, his comprehension of human character and his genius for speech. And though his own scientific results were not to be compared with those of Galileo and Descartes, the wonderful range of his observation and his curiosity, the unwearying zest of his scrutiny of well-nigh all the known fields of Nature, must have been an inspiration to multitudes of students besides those who have recorded their debt to him. It is probable that but for his literary genius, which though little discussed is of a very rare order, his influence would have been both narrower and less durable; but, being one of the great writers of the modern world, he has swayed men down till our own day.

Certain it is that alongside of his doctrine there persisted in England, apart from all printed utterance, a movement of deistic rationalism, of which the eighteenth century saw only the fuller development. Sir John Suckling (1609-1641), rewriting about 1637 his letter to the Earl of Dorset, *An Account of Religion by Reason*, tells how in a first sketch it "had like to have made me an Atheist at Court," and how "the fear of Socinianism at this time renders every man that offers to give an account of religion by reason, suspected to have none at all";<sup>3</sup> but he also mentions that he knows it "still to be the opinion of good wits that the particular religion of Christians has added little to the general religion of the world."<sup>4</sup> Himself a young man of talent, he offers quasi-rational reconciliations of faith with reason which can have satisfied no real doubter, and can hardly have failed to introduce doubt into the minds of some of his readers.

<sup>1</sup> Rawley's *Life*, in ed. cited, p. 9; Osborn, as above cited; Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* introd. § 14; T. Martin, *Character of Bacon*, 1835, pp. 216, 227, 222-23.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Fowler, *Bacon*, pp. 139-41; Mill, *Logic*, bk. vi, ch. v, § 5; Jevons, *Princ. of Science*, 1-vol. ed. p. 576; Tyndall, *Scientific Use of the Imagination*, 3rd ed. pp. 4, 8-9, 42-43; T. Martin, as cited, pp. 210-38; Bagehot, *Postulates of Eng. Polit. Econ.* ed. 1885, pp. 18-19; Ellis and Spedding, in ed. cited, pp. x, xii, 22, 389. The notion of a dialectic method which should mechanically enable any man to make discoveries is an irredeemable fallacy, and must be abandoned. Bacon's own remarkable anticipation of modern scientific thought in the formula that heat is a mode of motion (*Nov. Org.* ii, 20) is not mechanically yielded by his own process, noteworthy and suggestive though that is.

<sup>3</sup> Pref. Epistle.

<sup>4</sup> Works, ed. Dublin, 1766, p. 159; ed. 1910, p. 344.



§ 5. *Popular Thought in Europe*

Of popular freethought in the rest of Europe there is little to chronicle for a hundred and fifty years after the Reformation. The epoch-making work of COPERNICUS, published in 1543, had little or no immediate effect in Germany, where, as we have seen, physical and verbal strifes had begun with the ecclesiastical revolution, and were to continue to waste the nation's energy for a century. In 1546, all attempts at ecclesiastical reconciliation having failed, the emperor Charles V, in whom Melancthon had seen a model monarch,<sup>1</sup> decided to put down the Protestant heresy by war. Luther had just died, apprehensive for his cause. Civil war now raged till the peace of Augsburg in 1555; whereafter Charles abdicated in favour of his son Philip. Here were in part the conditions which in France and elsewhere were later followed by a growth of rational unbelief; and there are some traces even at this time of partial skepticism in high places in the German world, notably in the case of the Emperor Maximilian II, who, "grown up in the spirit of doubt,"<sup>2</sup> would never identify himself with either Protestants or Catholics.<sup>3</sup> But in Germany there was still too little intellectual light, too little brooding over experience, to permit of the spread of such a temper; and the balance of forces amounted only to a deadlock between the ecclesiastical parties. Protestantism on the intellectual side, as already noted, had sunk into a bitter and barren polemic<sup>4</sup> among the reformers themselves; and many who had joined the movement reverted to Catholicism.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the teaching and preaching Jesuits were zealously at work, turning the dissensions of the enemy to account, and contrasting its schism upon schism with the unity of the Church. But Protestantism was well welded to the financial interest of the many princes and others who had acquired the Church lands confiscated at the Reformation; since a return to Catholicism would mean the surrender of these.<sup>6</sup> Thus there wrought on the one side the organized spirit of anti-heresy<sup>7</sup> and on the other the organized spirit of Bibliolatry, neither gaining ground; and between the two, intellectual life was paralysed. Protestantism saw no way of advance; and the prevailing temper began to be that

<sup>1</sup> Kohlrausch, *Hist. of Germany*, Eng. tr. p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> Moritz Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union*, 1867-73, ii, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 416.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 12-13; Kohlrausch, p. 438; Pusey, *Histor. Enq. into Ger. Rationalism*, pp. 9-25; Henderson, *Short Hist. of Germany*, i, ch. xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Kohlrausch, p. 439. A specially strong reaction set in about 1573. Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union*, i, 19. Cp. Menzel, Cap. 433.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 16, 18, 21; Kohlrausch, p. 370.

<sup>7</sup> As to this see Moritz Ritter, as cited, i, 9, 27; ii, 122 sq.; Dunham, *Hist. of the Germanic Empire*, iii, 186; Henderson, i, 411 sq.

of the Dark Ages, expectant of the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> Superstition abounded, especially the belief in witchcraft, now acted on with frightful cruelty throughout the whole Christian world;<sup>2</sup> and in the nature of the case Catholicism counted for nothing on the opposite side.

The only element of rationalism that one historian of culture can detect is the tendency of the German moralists of the time to turn the devil into an abstraction by identifying him with the different aspects of human folly and vice.<sup>3</sup> There was, as a matter of fact, a somewhat higher manifestation of the spirit of reason in the shape of some new protests against the superstition of sorcery. About 1560 a Catholic priest named Cornelius Loos Callidius was imprisoned by a papal nuncio for declaring that witches' confessions were merely the results of torture. Forced to retract, he was released; but again offended, and was again imprisoned, dying in time to escape the fate of a councillor of Trèves, named Flade, who was burned alive for arguing, on the basis of an old canon (mistakenly named from the Council of Ancyra), that sorcery is an imaginary crime.<sup>4</sup> Such an infamy explains a great deal of the stagnation of many Christian generations. But courage was not extinct; and in 1563 there appeared the famous John Wier's treatise on witchcraft,<sup>5</sup> a work which, though fully adhering to the belief in the devil and things demoniac, argued against the notion that witches were conscious workers of evil. Wier<sup>6</sup> was a physician, and saw the problem partly as one in pathology. Other laymen, and even priests, as we have seen, had reacted still more strongly against the prevailing insanity; but it had the authority of Luther on its side, and with the common people the earlier protests counted for little.

Reactions against Protestant bigotry in Holland on other lines were not much more successful, and indeed were not numerous. One of the most interesting is that of DIRK COORNHERT (1522-1590), who by his manifold literary activities<sup>7</sup> became one of the founders of Dutch prose. In his youth Coornhert had visited Spain

<sup>1</sup> Freytag, *Bilder aus d. deutschen Vergangenheit*, Bd. ii, 1883, p. 381; Bd. iii, *ad init.*

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 53-83.

<sup>3</sup> Freytag, *Bilder*, Bd. ii, Abth. ii, p. 378.

<sup>4</sup> *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. tr. p. 260; French tr. p. 285.

<sup>5</sup> *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, 1563. See it described by Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 85-87; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 76.

<sup>6</sup> By Dutch historians Wier is claimed as a Dutchman. He was born at Grave, in North Brabant, but studied medicine at Paris and Orleans, and after practising physic at Arnheim in the Netherlands was called to Düsseldorf as physician to the Duke of Jülich, to whom he dedicated his treatise. His ideas are probably traceable to his studies in France.

<sup>7</sup> His collected works (1632) amount to nearly 7,000 folio pages. J. Ten Brink, *Kleine Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letteren*, 1882, p. 91.



and Portugal, and had there, it is said, seen an execution of victims of the Inquisition,<sup>1</sup> deriving thence the aversion to intolerance which stamped his whole life's work. It does not appear, however, that any such peninsular experience was required, seeing that the Dutch Inquisition became abundantly active about the same period. Learning Latin at thirty, in order to read Augustine, he became a translator of Cicero and—singularly enough—of Boccaccio. An engraver to trade, he became first notary and later secretary to the burgomaster of Haarlem; and, failing to steer clear of the strifes of the time, was arrested and imprisoned at the Hague in 1567. On his release he sought safety at Kleef in Santen, whence he returned after the capture of Brill to become secretary of the new national Government at Haarlem; but he had again to take to flight, and lived at Kleef from 1572 to 1577. In 1578 he debated at Leyden with two preachers of Delft on predestination, which he declared to be unscriptural; and was officially ordered to keep silence. Thereupon he published a protest, and got into fresh trouble by drawing up, as notary, an appeal to the Prince of Orange on behalf of his Catholic fellow-countrymen for freedom of worship, and by holding another debate at the Hague.<sup>2</sup> Always his master-ideal was that of toleration, in support of which he wrote strongly against Beza and Calvin (this in a Latin treatise published only after his death), declaring the persecution of heretics to be a crime in the kingdom of God; and it was as a moralist that he gave the lead to Arminius on the question of predestination.<sup>3</sup> "Against Protestant and Catholic sacerdotalism and scholastic he set forth humanist world-wisdom and Biblical ethic,"<sup>4</sup> to that end publishing a translation of Boëthius (1585), and composing his chief work on *Zedekunst* (Ethics). Christianity, he insisted, lay not in profession or creed, but in practice. By way of restraining the ever-increasing malignity of theological strifes, he made the quaint proposal that the clergy should not be allowed to utter anything but the actual words of the Scriptures, and that all works of theology should be sequestered. For these and other heteroclitic suggestions he was expelled from Delft (where he sought finally to settle, 1587) by the magistrates, at the instance of the preachers, but was allowed to die in peace at Gouda, where he wrote to the last.<sup>5</sup>

All the while, though he drew for doctrine on Plutarch, Cicero,

<sup>1</sup> Ten Brink, p. 86. Jonckbloet (*Beknopte Geschiedenis der Nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 148) is less specific.

<sup>2</sup> Ten Brink, pp. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 83.

<sup>4</sup> Ten Brink, p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis*, p. 149; Ten Brink, p. 91; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. KOORNHERT; Pünier, *Hist. of the Chr. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. p. 269; Dr. E. Gosse, art. on Dutch Literature in *Encyc. Brit.* 9th ed. xii, 93.

Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius equally with the Bible, Coornhert habitually founded on the latter as the final authority.<sup>1</sup> On no other footing could any one in his age and country stand as a teacher. It was not till after generations of furious intolerance that a larger outlook was possible in the Netherlands; and the first steps towards it were naturally taken independently of theology. Although Grotius figured for a century as one of the chief exponents of Christian evidences, it is certain that his great work on the Law of War and Peace (1625) made for a rationalistic conception of society. "Modern historians of jurisprudence, like Lermnier and Bluntschli, represent it as the distinctive merit of Grotius that he freed the science from bondage to theology."<sup>2</sup> The breach, indeed, is not direct, as theistic sanctions are paraded in the Prolegomena; but along with these goes the avowal that natural ethic would be valid even were there no God, and—as against the formula of Horace, *Utilitas justi mater*—that "the mother of natural right is human nature itself."<sup>3</sup>

Where Grotius, defender of the faith, figured as a heretic, unbelief could not speak out, though there are traces of its underground life. The charge of atheism was brought against the *Excercitationes Philosophicæ* of Gorlæus, published in 1620; but, the book being posthumous, conclusions could not be tried. Views far short of atheism, however, were dangerous to their holders; for the merely Socinian work of Voelkel, published at Amsterdam in 1642, was burned by order of the authorities, and a second impression shared the same fate.<sup>4</sup> In 1653 the States of Holland forbade the publication of all Unitarian books and all Socinian worship; and though the veto as to books was soon evaded, that on worship was enforced.<sup>5</sup> Still, Holland was relatively tolerant as beside other countries; and when the Unitarian physician Daniel Zwick (1612-1678), of Dantzic, found his own country too hot to hold him, he came to Holland (about 1652) "for security and convenience."<sup>6</sup> He was able to publish at Amsterdam in 1658 his Latin *Irenicum Irenicorum*, wherein he lays down three principles for the settlement of Christian difficulties, the first being "the universal reason of mankind," while Scripture and tradition hold only the second and third places. His book is a remarkable investigation of the rise of the doctrines of the *Logos* and the Trinity, which he traced to polytheism, making out that the first Christians, whom he identified with the Nazarenes, regarded Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Ten Brink, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, proleg. §§ 11, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Schlegel's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 862.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 392.

<sup>5</sup> Flint, *Vico*, p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> Bayle, art. VOELKEL.



as a man. The book evoked many answers, and it is somewhat surprising that Zwicker escaped serious persecution, dying peacefully in Amsterdam in 1678, whereas writers much less pronounced in their heresy incurred aggressive hostility. Descartes, as we shall see, during his stay in Holland was menaced by clerical fanaticism. Some fared worse. In the generation after Grotius, one Koerbagh, a doctor, for publishing (1668) a dictionary of definitions containing advanced ideas, had to fly from Amsterdam. At Culenberg he translated a Unitarian work and began another; but was betrayed, tried for blasphemy, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, to be followed by ten years' banishment. He compromised by dying in prison within the year. Even as late as 1678 the juri-consult Hadrian Beverland (afterwards appointed, through Isaac Vossius, to a lay office under the Church of England) was imprisoned and struck off the rolls of Leyden University for his *Peccatum Originale*, in which he speculated erotically as to the nature of the sin of Adam and Eve. The book was furiously answered, and publicly burned.<sup>1</sup> It was only after an age of such intolerance that Holland, at the end of the seventeenth century, began to become for England a model of freedom in opinion, as formerly in trade. And it seems to have been through Holland, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, that there came the fresh Unitarian impulse which led to the considerable spread of the movement in England after the Revolution of 1688.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarianism, which we have seen thus invading Holland somewhat persistently during half a century, was then as now impotent beyond a certain point by reason of its divided allegiance, though it has always had the support of some good minds. Its denial of the deity of Jesus could not be made out without a certain superposing of reason on Scripture; and yet to Scripture it always finally appealed. The majority of men accepting such authority have always tended to believe more uncritically; and the majority of men who are habitually critical will always repudiate the Scriptural jurisdiction. In Poland, accordingly, the movement, so flourishing in its earlier years, was soon arrested, as we have seen, by the perception that it drove many Protestants back to Catholicism; among these being presumably a number whose critical insight showed them that there was no firm standing-ground between Catholicism and Naturalism. Every new advance within the Unitarian pale

<sup>1</sup> Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir*, etc., xiv (1731), 340 sq. One of the replies is the *Justa Detestatio sceleratissimi libelli Adriani Beverlandi De Peccato Originale*, by Leonard Ryssen, 1680. A very free version of Beverland's book appeared in French in 1714 under the title *Etat de l'Homme dans le Peché Originel*. It reached a sixth edition in 1741.

<sup>2</sup> Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, as cited, p. 280.

terrified the main body, many of whom were mere Arians, holding by the term Trinity, and merely making the Son subordinate to the Father. Thus when one of their most learned ministers, Simon Budny, followed in the steps of Ferencz Davides (whom we have seen dying in prison in Transylvania in 1579), and represented Jesus as a "mere" man, he was condemned by a synod (1582) and deposed from his office (1584). He recanted, and was reinstated,<sup>1</sup> but his adherents seem to have been excommunicated. The sect thus formed were termed Semi-Judaizers by another heretic, Martin Czechowicz, who himself denied the pre-existence of Jesus, and made him only a species of demi-god;<sup>2</sup> yet Fausto Sozzini, better known as Faustus Socinus, who also wrote against them, and who had worked with Biandrata to have Davides imprisoned, conceded that prayer to Christ was optional.<sup>3</sup>

Faustus, who arrived in Poland in 1579, seems to have been moved to his strenuously "moderate" policy, which for a time unified the bulk of the party, mainly by a desire to keep on tolerable terms with Protestantism. That, however, did not serve him with the Catholics; and when the reaction set in he suffered severely at their hands. His treatise, *De Jesu Christu Servatore*, created bitter resentment; and in 1598 the Catholic rabble of Cracow, led "as usual by the students of the university," dragged him from his house. His life was saved only by the strenuous efforts of the rector and two professors of the university; and his library was destroyed, with his manuscripts, whereof "he particularly regretted a treatise which he had composed against the atheists";<sup>4</sup> though it is not recorded that the atheists had ever menaced either his life or his property. He seems to have been zealous against all heresy that outwent his own, preaching passive obedience in politics as emphatically as any churchman, and condemning alike the rising of the Dutch against Spanish rule and the resistance of the French Protestants to their king.<sup>5</sup>

This attitude may have had something to do with the better side of the ethical doctrines of the sect, which leant considerably to non-resistance. Czechowicz (who was deposed by his fellow-Socinians for schism) seems not only to have preached a patient endurance of injuries, but to have meant it;<sup>6</sup> and to the Socinian sect belongs the

<sup>1</sup> Krasinski, *Ref. in Poland*, 1840, ii, 363; Mosheim, 16 Cent. sec. iii, pt. ii, ch. iv, § 22. Budny translated the Bible, with rationalistic notes.

<sup>2</sup> Krasinski, p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> Mosheim, last cit. § 23, note 4.

<sup>4</sup> Krasinski, p. 367; Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.* 1850, ii, 320.

<sup>5</sup> Bayle, art. FAUSTE SOCIN. Krasinski, p. 374.

<sup>6</sup> Krasinski, pp. 361-62. Fausto Sozzini also could apparently forgive everybody save those who believed less than he did.



main credit of setting up a humane compromise on the doctrine of eternal punishment.<sup>1</sup> The time, of course, had not come for any favourable reception of such a compromise in Christendom; and it is noted of the German Socinian, Ernst Schonher (Sonerus), who wrote against the orthodox dogma, that his works are "exceedingly scarce."<sup>2</sup> Unitarianism as a whole, indeed, made little headway outside of Poland and Transylvania.

In Spain, meantime, there was no recovery from the paralysis wrought by the combined tyranny of Church and Crown, incarnate in the Inquisition. The monstrous multiplication of her clergy might alone have sufficed to set up stagnation in her mental life; but, not content with the turning of a vast multitude<sup>3</sup> of men and women away from the ordinary work of life, her rulers set themselves to expatriate as many more on the score of heresy. A century after the expulsion of the Jews came the turn of the Moors, whose last hold in Spain, Granada, had been overthrown in 1492. Within a generation they had been deprived of all exterior practice of their religion;<sup>4</sup> but that did not suffice, and the Inquisition never left them alone. Harried, persecuted, compulsorily baptized, deprived of their Arabic books, they repeatedly revolted, only to be beaten down. At length, in the opening years of the seventeenth century (1610-1613), under Philip III, on the score that the great Armada had failed because heretics were tolerated at home, it was decided to expel the whole race; and now a million Moriscoes, among the most industrious inhabitants of Spain, were driven the way of the Jews. It is needless here to recall the ruinous effect upon the material life of Spain:<sup>5</sup> the aspect of the matter which specially concerns us is the consummation of the policy of killing out all intellectual variation. The Moriscoes may have counted for little in positive culture; but they were one of the last and most important factors of variation in the country; and when Spain was thus successively denuded of precisely the most original and energetic types among the Jewish, the Spanish, and the Moorish stocks, her mental arrest was complete.

To modern freethought, accordingly, she has till our own age

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the inquiry as to Locke's Socinianism in J. Milner's *Account of Mr. Lock's Religion out of his own Writings*, 1706, and Lessing's *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, i, as to Leibnitz's criticism of Sonerus.

<sup>2</sup> Enfield's *History of Philosophy* (an abstract of Brucker), ed. 1840, p. 537.

<sup>3</sup> In the dominions of Philip II there are said to have been 58 archbishops, 684 bishops, 11,400 abbots, 23,000 religious fraternities, 46,000 monasteries, 13,500 nunneries, 312,000 secular priests, 400,000 monks, 200,000 friars and other ecclesiastics. H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, 1895, pp. 67-68. Spain alone had 9,088 monasteries.

<sup>4</sup> Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 484; 1-vol. ed. p. 564, and refs.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 497-99; 1-vol. ed. pp. 572-73; La Rigaudière, *Hist. des Perséc. Relig. en Espagne*, 1860, pp. 226-26.

contributed practically nothing. Huarte seems to have had no Spanish successors. The brilliant dramatic literature of the reigns of the three Philips, which influenced the rising drama alike of France and England, is notably unintellectual,<sup>1</sup> dealing endlessly in plot and adventure, but yielding no great study of character, and certainly doing nothing to further ethics. Calderon was a thorough fanatic, and became a priest;<sup>2</sup> Lope de Vega found solace under bereavement in zealously performing the duties of an Inquisitor; and was so utterly swayed by the atrocious creed of persecution which was blighting Spain that he joined in the general exultation over the expulsion of the Moriscoes. Even the mind of Cervantes had not on this side deepened beyond the average of his race and time;<sup>3</sup> his old wrongs at Moorish hands perhaps warping his better judgment. His humorous and otherwise kindly spirit, so incongruously neighboured, must indeed have counted for much in keeping life sweet in Spain in the succeeding centuries of bigotry and ignorance. But from the seventeenth century till the other day the brains were out, in the sense that genius was lacking. That species of variation had been too effectually extirpated during two centuries to assert itself until after a similar duration of normal conditions. The "immense advantage of religious unity," which even a modern Spanish historian<sup>4</sup> has described as a gain balancing the economic loss from the expulsion of the Moriscoes, was precisely the condition of minimum intellectual activity—the unity of stagnation. No kind of ratiocinative thought was allowed to raise its head. A Latin translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus had been permitted, or at least published, in Catholic France; but when Martin Martinez de Cantatapiedra, a learned orientalist and professor of theology, ventured to do the same thing in Spain—doubtless with the idea of promoting faith by discouraging reason—he was haled before the Inquisition, and the book proscribed (1583). He was further charged with Lutheran leanings on the score that he had a preference for the actual text of Scripture over that of the commentators.<sup>5</sup> In such an atmosphere it was natural that works on mathematics, astronomy, and physics should be censured as "favouring materialism and sometimes atheism."<sup>6</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lewes, *Spanish Drama*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> "He inspires me only with horror for the faith which he professes. No one ever so far disfigured Christianity; no one ever assigned to it passions so ferocious, or morals so corrupt" (Sismondi, *Lit. of South of Europe*, Bohn tr. ii, 379).

<sup>3</sup> Ticknor, *Hist. of Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. ii, 501; *Don Quixote*, pt. ii, ch. liv; Ormsby, tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1885, introd. i, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Lafuente, *Historia de Espana*, 1856, xvii, 340. It is not quite certain that Lafuente expressed his sincere opinion.

<sup>5</sup> Llorente, ii, 433.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 420.



has been held by one historian that at the death of Philip II there arose some such sense of relief throughout Spain as was felt later in France at the death of Louis XIV; that "the Spaniards now ventured to sport with the chains which they had not the power to break"; and that Cervantes profited by the change in conceiving and writing his *Don Quixote*.<sup>1</sup> But the same historian had before seen that "poetic freedom was circumscribed by the same shackles which fettered moral liberty. Thoughts which could not be expressed without fear of the dungeon and the stake were no longer materials for the poet to work on. His imagination, instead of improving them into poetic ideas.....had to be taught to reject them. But the eloquence of prose was more completely bowed down under the inquisitorial yoke than poetry, because it was more closely allied to truth, which of all things was the most dreaded."<sup>2</sup> Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon proved that within the iron wall of Catholic orthodoxy, in an age when conclusions were but slowly being tried between dogma and reason, there could be a vigorous play of imaginative genius on the field of human nature; even as in Velasquez, sheltered by royal favour, the genius of colour and portraiture could become incarnate. But after these have passed away, the laws of social progress are revealed in the defect of all further Spanish genius. Even of Cervantes it is recorded—on very doubtful authority, however—that he said "I could have made *Don Quixote* much more amusing if it were not for the Inquisition"; and it is matter of history that a passage in his book<sup>3</sup> disparaging perfunctory works of charity was in 1619 ordered by the Holy Office to be expunged as impious and contrary to the faith.

See H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, p. 167. *Don Quixote* was "always under suspicion of the orthodox." *Id.* p. 166. Mr. Watts, saying nothing of Cervantes's approval of the expulsion of the Moriscos, claims that his "head was clear of the follies and extravagances of the reigning superstition" (*id.* p. 231). But the case is truly summed up by Mr. Ormsby when he says: "For one passage capable of being tortured into covert satire" against things ecclesiastical, "there are ten in *Don Quixote* and the novels that show—what indeed is very obvious from the little we know of his life and character—that Cervantes was a faithful son of the Church" (tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1885, introd. i, 57).

When the total intellectual life of a nation falls ever further in the rear of the world's movement, even the imaginative arts are

<sup>1</sup> Bouterwek, *Hist. of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, Eng. tr. 1823, i, 331.  
<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 151. <sup>3</sup> Part II, ch. xxxvi.

stunted. Turkey excepted, the civilized nations of Europe which for two centuries have contributed the fewest great names to the world's bead-roll have been Spain, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, and Greece, all noted for their "religious unity." And of all of these Spain is the supreme instance of positive decadence, she having exhibited in the first half of the sixteenth century a greater complex of energy than any of the others.<sup>1</sup> The lesson is monumental.

### § 6. Scientific Thought

It remains to trace briefly the movement of scientific and speculative thought which constituted the transition between the Scholastic and the modern philosophy. It may be compendiously noted under the names of Copernicus, Bruno, Vanini, Galileo, Ramus, Gassendi, Bacon, and Descartes.

The great performance of COPERNICUS (Nicolaus Koppernigk, 1473–1543), given to the world with an editor's treacherous preface as he lay paralysed on his deathbed, did not become a general possession for over a hundred years. The long reluctance of its author to let it be published, despite the express invitation of a cardinal in the name of the pope, was well founded in his knowledge of the strength of common prejudice; and perhaps partly in a sense of the scientific imperfection of his own case.<sup>2</sup> Only the special favour accorded to his first sketch at Rome—a favour which he had further carefully planned for in his dedicatory epistle to Pope Paul—saved his main treatise from prohibition till long after its work was done.<sup>3</sup> It was in fact, with all its burden of traditional error, the most momentous challenge that had yet been offered in the modern world to established beliefs, alike theological and lay, for it seemed to flout "common sense" as completely as it did the cosmogony of the sacred books. It was probably from scraps of ancient lore current in Italy in his years of youthful study there that he first derived his idea; and in Italy none had dared publicly to propound the geocentric theory. Its gradual victory, therefore, is the first great modern instance of a triumph of reason over spontaneous and

<sup>1</sup> Bouterwek, whose sociology, though meritorious, is ill-clarified, argues that the Inquisition was in a manner congenital to Spain because before its establishment the suspicion of heresy was already "more degrading in Spain than the most odious crimes in other countries." But the same might have been said of the other countries also. As to earlier Spanish heresy see above, vol. i, p. 337 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Despite the many fallacies retained by Copernicus from the current astronomy, he must be pronounced an exceptionally scientific spirit. Trained as a mathematician, astronomer, and physician, he showed a keen and competent interest in the practical problem of currency; and one of the two treatises which alone he published of his own accord was a sound scheme for the rectification of that of his own government. Though a canon of Frauenburg, he never took orders; but did manifold and unselfish secular service.

<sup>3</sup> It was shielded by thirteen popes—from Paul III to Paul V.



instilled prejudice; and Galileo's account of his reception of it should be a classic document in the history of rationalism.

It was when he was a student in his teens that there came to Pisa one Christianus Urstadius of Rostock, a follower of Copernicus, to lecture on the new doctrine. The young Galileo, being satisfied that "that opinion could be no other than a solemn madness," did not attend; and those of his acquaintance who did made a jest of the matter, all save one, "very intelligent and wary," who told him that "the business was not altogether to be laughed at." Thenceforth he began to inquire of Copernicans, with the result inevitable to such a mind as his. "Of as many as I examined I found not so much as one who told me not that he had been a long time of the contrary opinion, but to have changed it for this, as convinced by the strength of the reasons proving the same; and afterwards questioning them one by one, to see whether they were well possessed of the reasons of the other side, I found them all to be very ready and perfect in them, so that I could not truly say that they took this opinion out of ignorance, vanity, or to show the acuteness of their wits." On the other hand, the opposing Aristoteleans and Ptolemeans had seldom even superficially studied the Copernican system, and had in no case been converted from it. "Whereupon, considering that there was no man who followed the opinion of Copernicus that had not been first on the contrary side, and that was not very well acquainted with the reasons of Aristotle and Ptolemy, while, on the contrary, there was not one of the followers of Ptolemy that had ever been of the judgment of Copernicus, and had left that to embrace this of Aristotle," he began to realize how strong must be the reasons that thus drew men away from beliefs "imbibed with their milk."<sup>1</sup> We can divine how slow would be the progress of a doctrine which could only thus begin to find its way into one of the most gifted scientific minds of the modern world. It was only a minority of the *élite* of the intellectual life who could receive it, even after the lapse of a hundred years.

The doctrine of the earth's two-fold motion, as we have seen, had actually been taught in the fifteenth century by Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-1464), who, instead of being prosecuted, was made a cardinal, so little was the question then considered (Ueberweg, ii, 23-24). See above, vol. i, p. 368, as to Pulci. Only very slowly did the work even of Copernicus make its impression. Green (*Short History*, ed. 1881, p. 297) makes

<sup>1</sup> Galileo, *Dialogi dei due massimi sistemi del mondo*, ii (*Opere*, ed. 1811, xi, 303-304).

first the mistake of stating that it influenced thought in the fifteenth century, and then the further mistake of saying that it was brought home to the general intelligence by Galileo and Kepler in the later years of the sixteenth century (*id.* p. 412). Galileo's European notoriety dates from 1616; his *Dialogues of the Two Systems of the World* appeared only in 1632; and his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* in 1638. Kepler's indecisive *Mysterium Cosmographicum* appeared only in 1597; his treatise on the motions of the planet Mars not till 1609.

One of the first to bring the new cosmological conception to bear on philosophic thought was GIORDANO BRUNO of Nola (1548-1600), whose life and death of lonely chivalry have won him his place as the typical martyr of modern freethought.<sup>1</sup> He may be conceived as a blending of the pantheistic and naturalistic lore of ancient Greece,<sup>2</sup> assimilated through the Florentine Platonists, with the spirit of modern science (itself a revival of the Greek) as it first takes firm form in Copernicus, whose doctrine Bruno early and ardently embraced. Baptized Filippo, he took Giordano as his cloister-name when he entered the great convent of S. Domenico Maggiore at Naples in 1563, in his fifteenth year. No human being was ever more unfitly placed among the Dominicans, punningly named the "hounds of the Lord" (*domini canes*) for their work as the corps of the Inquisition; and very early in his cloister life he came near being formally proceeded against for showing disregard of sacred images, and making light of the sanctity of the Virgin.<sup>3</sup> He passed his novitiate, however, without further trouble, and was fully ordained a priest in 1572, in his twenty-fourth year. Passing then through several Neapolitan monasteries during a period of three years, he seems to have become not a little of a freethinker on his return to his first cloister, as he had already reached Arian opinions in regard

<sup>1</sup> A good study of Bruno is supplied by Owen in his *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*. He has, however, omitted to embody the later discoveries of Dufour and Berti, and has some wrong dates. The *Life of Giordano Bruno*, by I. Frith (Mrs. Oppenheim), 1887, gives all the data, but is inadequate on the philosophic side. A competent estimate is given in the late Prof. Adamson's lectures on *The Development of Modern Philosophy*, etc., 1903, ii, 23 sq.; also in his art. in *Encyc. Brit.* For a hostile view see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 105-111. The biography of Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, 1846, is extremely full and sympathetic, but was unavoidably loose as to dates. Much new matter has since been collected, for which see the *Vita di Giordano Bruno* of Domenico Berti, rev. and enlarged ed. 1889; Prof. J. L. McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1903; Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Genève: Documents Inédits*, 1884; David Levi, *Giordano Bruno, o la religione del pensiero: l'uomo, l'apostolo e il martire*, 1887; Dr. H. Brunnhofer's *Giordano Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängniss*, 1882; and the doctoral treatise of C. Sigwart, *Die Lebensgeschichte Giordano Brunos*, Tübingen, 1880. For other authorities see Owen's and I. Frith's lists, and the final *Literaturnachweis* in Gustav Louis's *Giordano Bruno, seine Weltanschauung und Lebensverfassung*, Berlin, 1900. The study of Bruno has been carried further in Germany than in England; but Mr. Whittaker (*Essays and Notices*, 1895) and Prof. McIntyre make up much leeway.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Bartholmæss, i, 49-53; Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 191-94 (Eng. tr. i, 232); Gustav Louis, as cited, pp. 11, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Berti, *Vita di Giordano Bruno*, 1889, pp. 40-41, 420. Bruno gives the facts in his own narrative before the Inquisitors at Venice.



to Christ, and soon proceeded to substitute a mystical and Pythagorean for the orthodox view of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup>

For the second time a "process" was begun against him, and he took flight to Rome (1576), presenting himself at a convent of his Order. News speedily came from Naples of the process against him, and of the discovery that he had possessed a volume of the works of Chrysostom and Jerome with the scholia of Erasmus—a prohibited thing. Only a few months before Bartolomeo Carranza, Bishop of Toledo, who had won the praise of the Council of Trent for his index of prohibited books, had been condemned to abjure for the doctrine that "the worship of the relics of the saints is of human institution," and had died in the same year at the convent to which Bruno had now gone. Thus doubly warned, he threw off his priestly habit, and fled to the Genoese territory,<sup>2</sup> where, in the commune of Noli, he taught grammar and astronomy. In 1578 he visited successively Turin, Venice, Padua, Bergamo, and Milan, resuming at the last-named town his monk's habit. Thereafter he again returned to Turin, passing thence to Chambéry at the end of 1578, and thence to Geneva early in 1579.<sup>3</sup> His wish, he said, was "to live in liberty and security"; but for that he must first renounce his Dominican habit; other Italian refugees, of whom there were many at Geneva, helping him to a layman's suit. Becoming a corrector of the press, he seems to have conformed externally to Calvinism; but after a stay of two and a-half months he published a short diatribe against one Antonio de La Faye, who professed philosophy at the Academy; and for this he was arrested and sentenced to excommunication, while his bookseller was subjected to one day's imprisonment and a fine.<sup>4</sup> After three weeks the excommunication was raised; but he nevertheless left Geneva, and afterwards spoke of Calvinism as the "deformed religion." After a few weeks' sojourn at Lyons he went to Toulouse, the very centre of inquisitional orthodoxy; and there, strangely enough, he was able to stay for more than a year,<sup>5</sup> taking his degree as Master of Arts and becoming professor of astronomy. But the civil wars made Toulouse unsafe; and at length, probably in 1581 or 1582, he reached Paris, where for a time he lectured as professor extraordinary.<sup>6</sup> In 1583 he reached England, where he remained till

<sup>1</sup> Berti, pp. 42-43, 47; Owen, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Not to Genoa, as Berti stated in his first ed. See ed. 1889, pp. 54, 392.

<sup>3</sup> Berti, p. 65. Owen has the uncorrected date, 1576.

<sup>4</sup> Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Genève: Documents Inédits*, 1884; Berti, pp. 95-97; Gustav Louis, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 73-75. Owen (p. 269) has overlooked these facts, set forth by Dufour in 1884. The documents are given in full in Frith, *Life*, 1887, p. 60 sq.

<sup>5</sup> The dates are in doubt. Cp. Berti, p. 115, and Frith, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> See his own narrative before the Inquisitors in 1592. Berti, p. 394.

1585, lecturing, debating at Oxford on the Copernican theory, and publishing a number of his works, four of them dedicated to his patron Castelnau de Mauvissière, the French ambassador. Oxford was then a stronghold of bigoted Aristotelianism, where bachelors and masters deviating from the master were fined, or, if openly hostile, expelled.<sup>1</sup> In that camp Bruno was not welcome. But he had other shelter, at the French Embassy in London, and there he had notable acquaintances. He had met Sir Philip Sidney at Milan in 1578; and his dialogue, *Cena de le Ceneri*, gives a vivid account of a discussion in which he took a leading part at a banquet given by Sir Fulke Greville. His picture of "Oxford ignorance and English ill-manners"<sup>2</sup> is not lenient; and there is no reason to suppose that his doctrine was then assimilated by many;<sup>3</sup> but his stay in the household of Castelnau was one of the happiest periods of his chequered life. While in England he wrote no fewer than seven works, four of them dedicated to Castelnau, and two—the *Heroic Fervours* and the *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*—to Sir Philip Sidney.

Returning to Paris on the recall of Castelnau in 1585, he made an attempt to reconcile himself to the Church, but it was fruitless; and thereafter he went his own way. After a public disputation at the university in 1586, he set out on a new peregrination, visiting first Mayence, Marburg, and Wittenberg. At Marburg he was refused leave to debate; and at Wittenberg he seems to have been carefully conciliatory, as he not only matriculated but taught for over a year (1586-1588), till the Calvinist party carried the day over the Lutheran.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter he reached Prague, Helmstadt, Frankfort, and Zurich. At length, on the fatal invitation of the Venetian youth Mocenigo, he re-entered Italian territory, where, in Venice, he was betrayed to the Inquisition by his treacherous and worthless pupil.<sup>5</sup>

What had been done for freethought by Bruno in his fourteen years of wandering, debating, and teaching through Europe it is impossible to estimate; but it is safe to say that he was one of the most powerful antagonists to orthodox unreason that had yet

<sup>1</sup> McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1907, pp. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> Frith, *Life*, p. 121, and refs.; Owen, p. 275; Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 136-38.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 111, note. As to Bruno's supposed influence on Bacon and Shakespeare, cp. Bartholmæss, i, 134-35; Frith, *Life*, pp. 104-48; and the author's *Montaigne and Shakspeare*, pp. 132-38. Here there is no case; but there is much to be said for Mr. Whittaker's view (*Essays and Notices*, p. 94) that Spenser's late Cantos on Mutability were suggested by Bruno's *Spaccio*. Prof. McIntyre supports.

<sup>4</sup> His praise of Luther, and his compliments to the Lutherans, are in notable contrast to his verdict on Calvinism. What happened was that at Wittenberg he was on his best behaviour, and was well treated accordingly.

<sup>5</sup> As to the traitor's motives cp. McIntyre, p. 66 sq.; Berti, p. 262 sq.



appeared. Of all men of his time he had perhaps the least affinity with the Christian creed, which was repellent to him alike in the Catholic and the Protestant versions. The attempt to prove him a believer on the strength of a non-autograph manuscript<sup>1</sup> is idle. His approbation of a religion for the discipline of uncivilized peoples is put in terms of unbelief.<sup>2</sup> In the *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* he derides the notion of a union of divine and human natures, and substantially proclaims a natural (theistic) religion, negating all "revealed" religions alike. Where Boccaccio had accredited all the three leading religions, Bruno disallows all with paganism, though he puts that above Christianity.<sup>3</sup> And his disbelief grew more stringent with his years. Among the heretical propositions charged against him by the Inquisition were these: that there is transmigration of souls; that magic is right and proper; that the Holy Spirit is the same thing as the soul of the world; that the world is eternal; that Moses, like the Egyptians, wrought miracles by magic; that the sacred writings are but a romance (*sogno*); that the devil will be saved; that only the Hebrews are descended from Adam, other men having descended from progenitors created by God before Adam; that Christ was not God, but was a notorious sorcerer (*insigne mago*), who, having deceived men, was deservedly hanged, not crucified; that the prophets and the apostles were bad men and sorcerers, and that many of them were hanged as such. The cruder of these propositions rest solely on the allegation of Mocenigo, and were warmly repudiated by Bruno: others are professedly drawn, always, of course, by forcing his language, but not without some colourable pretext, from his two "poems," *De triplice, minimo, et mensura*, and *De monade, numero et figura*, published at Frankfort in 1591, in the last year of his freedom.<sup>4</sup> But the allusions in the *Sigillus Sigillorum*<sup>5</sup> to the weeping worship of a suffering Adonis, to the exhibition of suffering and miserable Gods, to transpierced divinities, and to sham miracles, were certainly intended to condemn the Christian system.

Alike in the details of his propaganda and in the temper of his utterance, Bruno expresses from first to last the spirit of freethought

<sup>1</sup> Noroff, as cited in Frith, p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> *De l'Infinito*, ed. Wagner, ii, 27; *Cena de la Ceneri*, ed. Wagner, i, 173; *Acrotismus*, ed. Gfrörer, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Berti, pp. 187-88; Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, 1895, p. 89; and Louis's section, *Stellung zu Christenthum und Kirche*.

<sup>4</sup> Berti, pp. 297-98. It takes much searching in the two poems to find any of the ideas in question, and Berti has attempted no collation; but, allowing for distortions, the Inquisition has sufficient ground for outcry.

<sup>5</sup> *Sigillus Sigillorum: De duodecima contractionis speciae*. Cp. F. J. Clemens, *Giordano Bruno und Nicolaus von Cusa*, 1847, pp. 176, 183; and H. Brunnhofer, *Giordano Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängniss*, 1882, pp. 227, 237.

and free speech. *Libertas philosophica*<sup>1</sup> is the breath of his nostrils; and by his life and his death alike he upholds the ideal for men as no other before him did. The wariness of Rabelais and the non-committal skepticism of Montaigne are alike alien to him; he is too lacking in reticence, too explosive, to give due heed even to the common-sense amenities of life, much more to hedge his meaning with safeguarding qualifications. And it was doubtless as much by the contagion of his mood as by his lore that he impressed men.

His personal and literary influence was probably most powerful in respect of his eager propaganda of the Copernican doctrine, which he of his own force vitally expanded and made part of a pantheistic conception of the universe.<sup>2</sup> Where Copernicus adhered by implication to the idea of an external and limitary sphere—the last of the eight of the Ptolemaic theory—Bruno reverted boldly to the doctrine of Anaximandros, and declared firmly for the infinity of space and of the series of the worlds. In regard to biology he makes an equivalent advance, starting from the thought of Empedocles and Lucretius, and substituting an idea of natural selection for that of creative providence.<sup>3</sup> The conception is definitely thought out, and marks him as one of the renovators of scientific no less than of philosophic thought for the modern world; though the special paralysis of science under Christian theology kept his ideas on this side pretty much a dead letter for his own day. And indeed it was to the universal and not the particular that his thought chiefly and most enthusiastically turned. A philosophic poet rather than a philosopher or man of science, he yet set abroad for the modern world that conception of the physical infinity of the universe which, once psychologically assimilated, makes an end of the medieval theory of things. On this head he was eagerly affirmative; and the merely Pyrrhonic skeptics he assailed as he did the "asinine" orthodox, though he insisted on doubt as the beginning of wisdom.

Of his extensive literary output not much is stamped with lasting scientific fitness or literary charm; and some of his treatises, as those on mnemonics, have no more value than the product of his didactic model, Raymond Lully. As a writer he is at his best in the sweeping expatiation of his more general philosophic treatises,

<sup>1</sup> In the treatise *De Lampade combinatoria Lulliana* (1587). According to Berti (p. 220) he is the first to employ this phrase, which becomes the watchword of Spinoza (*libertas philosophandi*) a century later.

<sup>2</sup> Berti, cap. iv; Owen, p. 249; Ueberweg, ii, 27; Pünjer, p. 93, sq.; Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, p. 66. As to Bruno's debt to Nicolaus of Cusa cp. Gustav Louis, as cited, p. 11; Pünjer, as cited; Carriere, *Die philosophische Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, p. 25; and Whittaker, p. 68. The argument of Carriere's second edition is analysed and rebutted by Mr. Whittaker, p. 253 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *De Immenso*, vii, c. 18, cited by Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, p. 70.



where he attains a lifting ardour of inspiration, a fervour of soaring outlook, that puts him in the front rank of the thinkers of his age. And if his literary character is at times open to severe criticism in respect of his lack of balance, sobriety, and self-command, his final courage atones for such shortcomings.

His case, indeed, serves to remind us that at certain junctures it is only the unbalanced types that aid humanity's advance. The perfectly prudent and self-sufficing man does not achieve revolutions, does not revolt against tyrannies; he wisely adapts himself and subsists, letting the evil prevail as it may. It is the more impatient and unreticent, the eager and hot-brained—in a word, the faulty—who clash with oppression and break a way for quieter spirits through the hedges of enthroned authority. The serenely contemplative spirit is rather a possession than a possessor for his fellows; he may inform and enlighten, but is not in himself a countering or inspiring force: a Shelley avails more than a Goethe against tyrannous power. And it may be that the battling enthusiast in his own way wins liberation for himself from "fear of fortune and death," as he wins for others liberty of action.<sup>1</sup> Even such a liberator, bearing other men's griefs and taking stripes that they might be kept whole, was Bruno.

And though he quailed at the first shock of capture and torture, when the end came he vindicated human nature as worthily as could any quietist. It was a long-drawn test. Charged on the traitor's testimony with many "blasphemies," he denied them all,<sup>2</sup> but stood to his published writings<sup>3</sup> and vividly expounded his theories,<sup>4</sup> professing in the usual manner to believe in conformity with the Church's teachings, whatever he might write on philosophy. It is impossible to trust the Inquisition records as to his words of self-humiliation;<sup>5</sup> though on the other hand no blame can rationally attach to anyone who, in his place, should try to deceive such enemies, morally on a level with hostile savages. It is certain that the Inquisitors frequently wrung recantations by torture.<sup>6</sup>

What is historically certain is that Bruno was not released, but sent on to Rome, and was kept there in prison for seven years. He was not the sort of heretic likely to be released; though the fact of his being a Dominican, and the desire to maintain the Church's

<sup>1</sup> As to Bruno's own claim in the *Eroici Furori*, cp. Whittaker, *Essays*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Documents in Berti, pp. 407-18; McIntyre, p. 75 sq.

<sup>3</sup> See the document in Berti, p. 398 sq.; Frith, pp. 270-81.

<sup>4</sup> See Berti, p. 396; Owen, pp. 285-86; Frith, pp. 282-83.

<sup>5</sup> The controversy as to whether Galileo was tortured leaves it clear that torture was common. See Dr. Parchappe, *Galilée, sa vie*, etc., 1866, Ptie. II, ch. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Berti, p. 400 sq.

intellectual credit, delayed so long his execution. Certainly not an atheist (he called himself in several of his book-titles *Philotheus*; he consigns *insano ateismo* to perdition;<sup>1</sup> and his quasi-panteism or monism often lapses into theistic modes),<sup>2</sup> he yet was from first to last essentially though not professedly anti-Christian in his view of the universe. If the Church had cause to fear any philosophic teaching, it was his, preached with the ardour of a prophet and the eloquence of a poet. His doctrine that the worlds in space are innumerable was as offensive to orthodox ears as his specific negations of Christian dogma, outgoing as it did the later idea of Kepler and Galileo. He had, moreover, finally refused to make any fresh recantation; and the only detailed document extant concerning his final trial describes him as saying to his judges: "With more fear, perchance, do you pass sentence on me than I receive it."<sup>3</sup> According to all accessible records, he was burned alive at Rome in February, 1600, in the Field of Flowers, near where his statue now stands. As was probably customary, they tied his tongue before leading him to the stake, lest he should speak to the people;<sup>4</sup> and his martyrdom was an edifying spectacle for the vast multitude of pilgrims who had come from all parts of Christendom for the jubilee of the pope.<sup>5</sup> At the stake, when he was at the point of death, there was duly presented to him the crucifix, and he duly put it aside.

An attempt has been made by Professor Desdouts in a pamphlet (*La légende tragique de Jordano Bruno*; Paris, 1885) to show that there is no evidence that Bruno was burned; and an anonymous writer in the *Scottish Review* (October, 1888, Art. II), rabidly hostile to Bruno, has maintained the same proposition. Doubt on the subject dates from Bayle. Its main ground is the fewness of the documentary records, of which, further, the genuineness is now called in question. But no good reason is shown for doubting them. They are three.

1. The Latin letter of Gaspar Schopp (Scioppius), dated February 17, 1600, is an eye-witness's account of the sentencing and burning of Bruno at that date. (See it in full, in the original Latin, in Berti, p. 461 sq., and in App. V to Frith, *Life*

<sup>1</sup> *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, ed. Wagner, ii, 120.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Carriere has contended that a transition from panteism to theism marks the growth of his thought; but, as is shown by Mr. Whittaker, he is markedly pantheistic in his latest work of all, though his pantheism is not merely naturalistic. *Essays and Notices*, pp. 72, 253-58.

<sup>3</sup> Italian versions differ verbally. Cp. Levi, p. 379; Berti, p. 386. That inscribed on the Bruno statue at Rome is a close rendering of the Latin: *Majori forsan cum timore sententiam in me fertis quam ego accipiam*, preserved by Scioppius.

<sup>4</sup> *Avviso*, in Berti, p. 329; in Levi, p. 386.

<sup>5</sup> Levi, pp. 384-92. Levi relates (p. 390) that Bruno at the stake was heard to utter the words: "O Eterno, io fo uno sforzo supremo per attrarre in me quanto vi tra di più divino nell'universo." He cites no authority. An *Avviso* reports that Bruno said his soul would rise with the smoke to Paradise (p. 386; Berti, p. 330), but does not state that this was said at the stake. And Levi accepts the other report that Bruno was gagged.



of Bruno, and partly translated in Prof. Adamson's lectures, as cited. It was rep. by Struvius in his *Acta Literaria*, tom. v, and by La Croze in his *Entretiens sur divers sujets* in 1711, p. 287.) It was not printed till 1621, but the grounds urged for its rejection are totally inadequate, and involve assumptions, which are themselves entirely unproved, as to what Scioppius was likely to do. Finally, no intelligible reason is suggested for the forging of such a document. The remarks of Prof. Desdouts on this head have no force whatever. The writer in the *Scottish Review* (p. 263, and note) suggests as "at least as possible an hypothesis as any other that he [Bruno] was the author of the forged accounts of his own death." Comment is unnecessary.

2. There are preserved two extracts from Roman news-letters (*Avvisi*) of the time; one, dated February 12, 1600, commenting on the case; the other, dated February 19, relating the execution on the 17th. (See both in *S. R.*, pp. 264-65. They were first printed by Berti in *Documenti intorno a Giordano Bruno*, Rome, 1880, and are reprinted in his *Vita*, ed. 1889, cap. xix; also by Levi, as cited.) Against these testimonies the sole plea is that they mis-state Bruno's opinions and the duration of his imprisonment—a test which would reduce to mythology the contents of most newspapers in our own day. The writer in the *Scottish Review* makes the suicidal suggestion that, inasmuch as the errors as to dates occur in Schopp's letter, "the so-called Schopp was fabricated from these notices, or they from Schopp"—thus admitting one to be historical.

3. There has been found, by a Catholic investigator, a double entry in the books of the Lay Brotherhood of *San Giovanni Decollato*, whose function was to minister to prisoners under capital sentence, giving a circumstantial account of Bruno's execution. (See it in *S. R.*, pp. 266, 269, 270.) In this case, the main entry being dated "1600. Thursday. February 16th," the anonymous writer argues that "the whole thing resolves itself into a make-up," because February 16 was the Wednesday. The entry refers to the procedure of the Wednesday night and the Thursday morning; and such an error could easily occur in any case. Whatever may be one day proved, the cavils thus far count for nothing. All the while, the records as to Bruno remain in the hands of the Catholic authorities; but, despite the discredit constantly cast on the Church on the score of Bruno's execution, they offer no official denial of the common statement; while they do officially admit (*S. R.*, p. 252) that on February 8 Bruno was sentenced as an "obstinate heretic," and "given over to the Secular Court." On the other hand, the episode is well vouched; and the argument from the silence of ambassadors' letters is so far void. No pretence is made of tracing Bruno anywhere after February, 1600.

Since the foregoing note appeared in the first edition I have met with the essay of Mr. R. Copley Christie, "Was Giordano Bruno Really Burned?" (*Macmillan's Magazine*, October, 1885; rep. in Mr. Christie's *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902). This is a crushing answer to the thesis of M. Desdouts, showing as it does clear grounds not only for affirming the genuineness of the letter of Scioppius, but for doubting the diligence of M. Desdouts. Mr. Christie points out (1) that in his book *Ecclesiasticus*, printed in 1612, Scioppius refers to the burning of Bruno almost in the words of his letter of 1600; (2) that in 1607 Kepler wrote to a correspondent of the burning of Bruno, giving as his authority J. M. Wacker, who in 1600 was living at Rome as the imperial ambassador; and (3) that the tract *Machiavellizatio*, 1621, in which the letter of Scioppius was first printed, was well known in its day, being placed on the *Index*, and answered by two writers without eliciting any repudiation from Scioppius, who lived till 1649. As M. Desdouts staked his case on the absence of allusion to the subject before 1661 (overlooking even the allusion by Mersenne, in 1624, cited by Bayle), his theory may be taken as exploded.

Bruno has been zealously blackened by Catholic writers for the obscenity of some of his writing<sup>1</sup> and the alleged freedom of his life—piquant charges, when we remember the life of the Papal Italy in which he was born. LUCILIO VANINI (otherwise Julius Cæsar Vanini), the next martyr of freethought, also an Italian (b. at Taurisano, 1585), is open to the more relevant charges of an inordinate vanity and some duplicity. Figuring as a Carmelite friar, which he was not, he came to England (1612) and deceitfully professed to abjure Catholicism,<sup>2</sup> gaining, however, nothing by the step, and contriving to be reconciled to the Church, after being imprisoned for forty-nine days on an unrecorded charge. Previously he had figured, like Bruno, as a wandering scholar at Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Geneva, and Lyons; and afterwards he taught natural philosophy for a year at Genoa. His treatise, *Amphitheatrum Æternæ Providentiæ* (Lyons, 1615), is professedly directed against "ancient philosophers, Atheists, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Stoics," and is ostensibly quite orthodox.<sup>3</sup> In one passage he untruthfully tells how, when imprisoned in England, he burned with the desire to shed his blood for the Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup> In another, after declaring that some Christian doctors have argued very weakly

<sup>1</sup> Notably his comedy *Il Candelajo*.

<sup>2</sup> Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 357. A full narrative, from the documents, is given in R. C. Christie's essay, "Vanini in England," in the *English Historical Review* of April, 1895, reprinted in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902.

<sup>3</sup> See it analysed by Owen, pp. 361-68, and by Carriere, *Weltanschauung*, pp. 496-504.

<sup>4</sup> *Amphitheatrum*, 1615, Exercit. xix, pp. 117-18.







balanced. By his own account he studied theology under the Carmelite Bartolomeo Argotti, phoenix of the preachers of the time;<sup>1</sup> but from the English Carmelite, John Bacon, "the prince of Averroists,"<sup>2</sup> he declares, he "learned to swear only by Averroës"; and of Pomponazzi he speaks as his master, and as "prince of the philosophers of our age."<sup>3</sup> He has criticized both freely in his *Amphitheatrum*; but whereas that work is a professed vindication of orthodoxy, we may infer from the *De Arcanis* that the arguments of these skeptics, like those of the contemporary atheists whom he had met in his travels, had kept their hold on his thought even while he controverted them. For it cannot be disputed that the long passages which he quotes from the "atheist at Amsterdam"<sup>4</sup> are put with a zest and cogency which are not infused into the professed rebuttals, and are in themselves quite enough to arouse the anger and suspicion of a pious reader. A writer who set forth so fully the acute arguments of unbelievers, unprintable by their authors, might well be suspected of writing at Christianity when he confuted the creeds of the pagans. As was noted later of Fontenelle, he put arguments against oracles which endangered prophecy; his dismissal of sorcery as the dream of troubled brains appeals to reason and not to faith; and his disparagement of pagan miracles logically bore upon the Christian.

When he comes to the question of immortality he grows overtly irreverent. Asked by the interlocutor in the last dialogue to give his views on the immortality of the soul, he begs to be excused, protesting: "I have vowed to my God that that question shall not be handled by me till I become old, rich, and a German." And without overt irreverence he is ever and again unserious. Perfectly transparent is the irony of the appeal, "Let us give faith to the prescripts of the Church, and due honour to the sacrosanct Gregorian apparitions,"<sup>5</sup> and the protestation, "I will not invalidate the powers of holy water, to which Alexander, Doctor and Pontifex of the Christians, and interpreter of the divine will, accorded such countless privileges."<sup>6</sup> And even in the *Amphitheatrum*, with all the parade of defending the faith, there is a plain balance of cogency on the side of the case for the attack,<sup>7</sup> and a notable disposition to rely finally on lines of argument to which faith could never give real welcome. The writer's mind, it is clear, was familiar with doubt.

<sup>1</sup> *De Arcanis*, p. 205. Lib. iii, dial. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *De Arcanis*, lib. iv, dial. 52, p. 379; dial. 51, p. 373. Cp. *Amphitheatrum*, p. 36; and *De Arcanis*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *De Arcanis*, dial. 50 and 56. In the *Amphitheatrum* he adduces an equally skilful German atheist (p. 73).

<sup>4</sup> Dial. ii, p. 371.

<sup>5</sup> Dial. liv, p. 407.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Rousselot, notice, p. xi.

In the malice of orthodoxy there is sometimes an instinctive perception of hostility; and though Vanini had written, among other things,<sup>1</sup> an *Apologia pro lege mosaica et christiana*, to which he often refers, and an *Apologia pro concilio Tridentino*, he can be seen even in the hymn to deity with which he concludes his *Amphitheatrum* to have no part in evangelical Christianity.

He was in fact a deist with the inevitable leaning of the philosophic theist to pantheism; and whatever he may have said to arouse priestly hatred at Toulouse, he was rather less of an atheist than Spinoza or Bruno or John Scotus. On his trial,<sup>2</sup> pressed as to his real beliefs by judges who had doubtless challenged his identification of God with Nature, he passed from a profession of orthodox faith in a trinity into a flowing discourse which could as well have availed for a vindication of pantheism as for the proposition of a personal God. Seeing a straw on the ground, he picked it up and talked of its history; and when brought back again from his affirmation of Deity to his doctrine of Nature, he set forth the familiar orthodox theorem that, while Nature wrought the succession of seeds and fruits, there must have been a first seed which was created. It was the habitual standing ground of theism; and they burned him all the same. It remains an open question whether personal enmity on the part of the prosecuting official<sup>3</sup> or a real belief that he had uttered blasphemies against Jesus or Mary was the determining force, or whether even less motive sufficed. A vituperative Jesuit of that age sees intolerable freethinking in his suggestion of the unreality of demoniacal possession and the futility of exorcisms.<sup>4</sup> And for that much they were not incapable of burning men in Catholic Toulouse in the days of Mary de Medici.

There are in fact reasons for surmizing that in the cases alike of Bruno and of Vanini it was the attitude of the speculator towards scientific problems that primarily or mainly aroused distrust and anger among the theologians. Vanini is careful to speak equivocally of the eternity of the universe; and though he makes a passing mention of Kepler,<sup>5</sup> he does not name Copernicus. He had learned something from the fate of Bruno. Yet in the Dialogue *De cæli forma et motore*<sup>6</sup> he declares so explicitly for a naturalistic explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies that he must have aroused in some orthodox readers such anger as was set up in Plato

<sup>1</sup> Durand compiles a list of ten or eleven works of Vanini from the allusions in the *Amphitheatrum* and the *De Arcanis*.

<sup>2</sup> Reported by Gramond, as cited.

<sup>3</sup> Garasse, *Doctrines curieuses des beaux esprits*, 1623.

<sup>4</sup> *De Arcanis*, dial. vii, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Owen, pp. 393-94.

<sup>6</sup> Dial. iv, p. 21.



by a physical theory of sun and stars. After an *a priori* discussion on Aristotelian lines, the querist in the dialogue asks what may fitly be held, with an eye to religion, concerning the movements of the spheres. "This," answers Vanini, "unless I am in error: the mass of the heaven is moved in its proper gyratory way by the nature of its elements." "How then," asks the querist, "are the heavens moved by certain and fixed laws, unless divine minds, participating in the primal motion, there operate?" "Where is the wonder?" returns Vanini. "Does not a certain and fixed law of motion act in the most paltry clockwork machines, made by a drunken German, even as there works silently in a tertian and quartan fever a motion which comes and goes at fixed periods without transgressing its line by a moment? The sea also at certain and fixed times, by its nature, as you peripatetics affirm, is moved in progressions and regressions. No less, then, I affirm the heaven to be forever carried by the same motion in virtue of its nature (*a sua pura forma*) and not to be moved by the will of intelligence." And the disciple assents. Kepler had seen fit, either in sincerity or of prudence, to leave "divine minds" in the planets; and Vanini's negation, though not accompanied by any assertion of the motion of the earth, was enough to provoke the minds which had only three years before put Copernicus on the *Index*, and challenged Galileo for venting his doctrine.

It is at this stage that we begin to realize the full play of the Counter-Reformation, as against the spirit of science. The movement of mere theological and ecclesiastical heresy had visibly begun to recede in the world of mind, and in its stead, alike in Protestant and in Catholic lands, there was emerging a new activity of scientific research, vaguely menacing to all theistic faith. Kepler represented it in Germany, Harriott and Harvey and Gilbert and Bacon in England; from Italy had come of late the portents of Bruno and Galileo; even Spain yielded the *Examen de Ingenios* of Huarte (1575), where with due protestation of theism the physicist insists upon natural causation; and now Vanini was exhibiting the same incorrigible zest for a naturalistic explanation of all things. His dialogues are full of such questionings; the mere metaphysic and theosophy of the *Amphitheatrum* are being superseded by discussions on physical and physiological phenomena. It was for this, doubtless, that the *De Arcanis* won the special vogue over which the Jesuit Garasse was angrily exclaiming ten years later.<sup>1</sup> Not

<sup>1</sup> *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps*, 1623, p. 848.

merely the doubts cast upon sorcery and diabolical possession, but the whole drift, often enough erratic, of the inquiry as to how things in nature came about, caught the curiosity of the time, soon to be stimulated by more potent and better-governed minds than that of the ill-starred Vanini. And for every new inquirer there would be a hostile zealot in the Church, where the anti-intellectual instinct was now so much more potent than it had been in the days before Luther, when heresy was diagnosed only as a danger to revenue.

It was with GALILEO that there began the practical application of the Copernican theory to astronomy, and, indeed, the decisive demonstration of its truth. With him, accordingly, began the positive rejection of the Copernican theory by the Church; for thus far it had never been officially vetoed—having indeed been generally treated as a wild absurdity. Almost immediately after the publication of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610) his name is found in the papers of the Inquisition, with that of Cremonini of Padua, as a subject of investigation.<sup>1</sup> The juxtaposition is noteworthy. Cremonini was an Aristotelian, with Averroist leanings, and reputed an atheist;<sup>2</sup> and it was presumably on this score that the Inquisition was looking into his case. At the same time, as an Aristotelian he was strongly opposed to Galileo, and is said to have been one of those who refused to look through Galileo's telescope.<sup>3</sup> Galileo, on the other hand, was ostensibly a good Catholic; but his discovery of the moons of Jupiter was a signal confirmation of the Copernican theory, and the new status at once given to that made a corresponding commotion in the Church. Thus he had against him both the unbelieving pedants of the schools and the typical priests.

In his book the great discoverer had said nothing explicitly on the subject of the Copernican theory; but in lectures and conversations he had freely avowed his belief in it; and the implications of the published treatise were clear to all thinkers.<sup>4</sup> And though, when he visited Rome in 1611, he was well received by Pope Paul V, and his discoveries were favourably reported of by the four scientific experts nominated at the request of Cardinal Bellarmine to examine them,<sup>5</sup> it only needed that the Biblical cry should be raised to

<sup>1</sup> Karl von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei and the Roman Curia*, Eng. tr. 1879, pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> This appears from the letters of Sagredo to Galileo. Gebler, p. 37. Cp. Gui Patin, Lett. 816, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii, 758; Bayle, art. CREMONINI, notes C and D; and Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 408-13. Patin writes that his friend Naudé "avait été intime ami de Cremonin, qui n'étoit point meilleur Chrétien que Pomponace, que Machiavel, que Cardan et telles autres.....dont le pays abonde."

<sup>3</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 183 (Eng. tr. i, 220); Gebler, p. 25. Libri actually made the refusal; but all that is proved as to Cremonini is that he opposed Galileo's discoveries *a priori*. As to the attitude of such opponents see Galileo's letter to Kepler.

<sup>4</sup> J. J. Fahie, *Galileo: his Life and Work*, 1903, pp. 101-102.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 127.



change the situation. The Church still contained men individually open to new scientific ideas; but she was then more than ever dominated by the forces of tradition; and as soon as those forces had been practically evoked his prosecution was bound to follow. The cry of "religion in danger" silenced the saner men at Rome.

The fashion in which Galileo's sidereal discoveries were met is indeed typical of the whole history of freethought. The clergy pointed to the story of Joshua stopping the sun and moon; the average layman scouted the new theory as plain folly; and typical schoolmen insisted that "the heavens are unchangeable," and that there was no authority in Aristotle for the new assertions. With such minds the man of science had to argue, and in deference to such he had at length to affect to doubt his own demonstrations.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Reaction had finally created as bitter a spirit of hostility to free science in the Church as existed among the Protestants; and in Italy even those who saw the moons of Jupiter through his telescope dared not avow what they had seen.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore an unfortunate step on Galileo's part to go from Padua, which was under the rule of Venice, then anti-papal,<sup>3</sup> to Tuscany, on the invitation of the Grand Duke. When in 1613 he published his treatise on the solar spots, definitely upholding Copernicus against Jesuits and Aristotelians, trouble became inevitable; and his letter<sup>4</sup> to his pupil, Father Castelli, professor of mathematics at Pisa, discussing the Biblical argument with which they had both been met, at once evoked an explosion when circulated by Castelli. New trouble arose when Galileo in 1615 wrote his apology in the form of a letter to his patroness the Dowager Grand Duchess Cristina of Tuscany, extracts from which became current. An outcry of ignorant Dominican monks<sup>5</sup> sufficed to set at work the machinery of the *Index*,<sup>6</sup> the first result of which (1616) was to put on the list of condemned books the great treatise of Copernicus, published seventy-three years before. Galileo personally escaped for the present through the friendly intervention of the Pope, Paul V, on the appeal of his patron, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, apparently on the ground that he had not publicly taught the Copernican theory. It would seem

<sup>1</sup> Gebler, pp. 54, 129, and *passim*; *The Private Life of Galileo* (by Mrs. Olney), Boston, 1870, pp. 67-72.

<sup>2</sup> Galileo's letter to Kepler, cited by Gebler, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> The Jesuits were expelled from Venice in 1616, in retaliation for a papal interdict.

<sup>4</sup> See it summarized by Gebler, pp. 46-50, and quoted in the *Private Life*, pp. 83-85.

<sup>5</sup> The measure of reverence with which the orthodox handled the matter may be inferred from the fact that the Dominican Caccini, who preached against Galileo in Florence, took as one of his texts the verse in Acts i: "Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in caelum," making a pun on the Scripture.

<sup>6</sup> See this summarized by Gebler, pp. 64-70.

as if some of the heads of the Church were at heart Copernicans;<sup>1</sup> but they were in any case obliged to disown a doctrine felt by so many others to be subversive of the Church's authority.

See the details of the procedure in Domenico Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, ed. 1878, cap. iv; in Fahie, ch. viii; and in Gebler, ch. vi. The last-cited writer claims to show that, of two records of the "admonition" to Galileo, one, the more stringent in its terms, was false, *though made at the date it bears*, to permit of subsequent proceedings against Galileo. But the whole thesis is otiose. It is admitted (Gebler, p. 89) that Galileo was admonished "not to defend or hold the Copernican doctrine." Gebler contends, however, that this was not a command to keep "entire silence," and that therefore Galileo is not justly to be charged with having disobeyed the injunction of the Inquisition when, in his *Dialogues on the Two Principal Systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and Copernican* (1632), he dealt dialectically with the subject, neither affirming nor denying, but treating both theories as hypotheses. But the real issue is not Galileo's cautious disobedience (see Gebler's own admissions, p. 149) to an irrational decree, but the crime of the Church in silencing him. It is not likely that the "enemies" of Galileo, as Gebler supposes (pp. 90, 338), anticipated his later dialectical handling of the subject, and so falsified the decision of the Inquisition against him in 1616. Gebler had at first adopted the German theory that the absolute command to silence was forged in 1632; and, finding the document certainly belonged to 1616, framed the new theory, quite unnecessarily, to save Galileo's credit. The two records are quite in the spirit and manner of Inquisitorial diplomacy. As Berti remarks, "the Holy Office proceeded with much heedlessness (*legerezza*) and much confusion" in 1616. Its first judgment, in either form, merely emphasizes the guilt of the second. Cp. Fahie, pp. 167-69.

Thus officially "admonished" for his heresy, but not punished, in 1616, Galileo kept silence for some years, till in 1618 he published his (erroneous) theory of the tides, which he sent with an ironical epistle to the friendly Archduke Leopold of Austria, professing to be propounding a mere dream, disallowed by the official veto on Copernicus.<sup>2</sup> This, however, did him less harm than his essay *Il Saggiatore* ("The Scales"), in which he opposed the Jesuit Grassi on the question of comets. Receiving the *imprimatur* in 1623, it was dedicated to the new pope, Urban VIII, who, as the Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, had been Galileo's friend. The latter could now

<sup>1</sup> See *The Private Life of Galileo*, pp. 86-87, 91, 99; Gebler, p. 44; Fahie, pp. 169-70; Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, 1878, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Gebler (p. 101) solemnly comments on this letter as a lapse into "servility" on Galileo's part.



hope for freedom of speech, as he had all along had a number of friends at the papal court, besides many priests, among his admirers and disciples. But the enmity of the Jesuits countervailed all. They did not succeed in procuring a censure of the *Saggiatore*, though that subtly vindicates the Copernican system while professing to hold it disproved by the fiat of the Church;<sup>1</sup> but when, venturing further, he after another lapse of years produced his *Dialogues on the Two Systems*, for which he obtained the papal *imprimatur* in 1632, they caught him in their net. Having constant access to the pope, they contrived to make him believe that Galileo had ridiculed him in one of the personages of his *Dialogues*. It was quite false; but one of the pope's anti-Copernican arguments was there unconsciously made light of; and his wounded vanity was probably a main factor in the impeachment which followed.<sup>2</sup> His Holiness professed to have been deceived into granting the *imprimatur*;<sup>3</sup> a Special Commission was set on foot; the proceedings of 1616 were raked up; and Galileo was again summoned to Rome. He was old and frail, and sent medical certificates of his unfitness for such travel; but it was insisted on, and as under the papal tyranny there was no help, he accordingly made the journey. After many delays he was tried, and, on his formal abjuration, sentenced to formal imprisonment (1633) for teaching the "absurd" and "false doctrine" of the motion of the earth and the non-motion of the sun from east to west. In this case the pope, whatever were his motives, acted as a hot anti-Copernican, expressing his personal opinion on the question again and again, and always in an anti-Copernican sense. In both cases, however, the popes, while agreeing to the verdict, abstained from officially ratifying it,<sup>4</sup> so that, in proceeding to force Galileo to abjure his doctrine, the Inquisition technically exceeded its powers—a circumstance in which some Catholics appear to find comfort. Seeing that three of the ten cardinals named in the preamble to the sentence did not sign, it has been inferred that they dissented; but there is no good reason to suppose that either the pope or they wilfully abstained from signing. They had gained their point—the humiliation of the great discoverer.

Compare Gebler, p. 241; *Private Life*, p. 257, quoting Tiraboschi. For an exposure of the many perversions of the facts as to Galileo by Catholic writers see Parchappe, *Galilée, sa vie*, etc., 2e Partie. To such straits has the Catholic Church been reduced in this matter that part of its defence of the

<sup>1</sup> Gebler, pp. 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Private Life*, pp. 216-18; Gebler, pp. 157-62.

<sup>3</sup> Berti, pp. 61-64; *Private Life*, pp. 212-13; Gebler, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Gebler, p. 239; *Private Life*, p. 256.

treatment of Galileo is the plea that he unwarrantably asserted that the fixity of the sun and the motion of the earth were taught in the Scriptures. Sir Robert Inglis is quoted as having maintained this view in England in 1824 (Mendham, *The Literary Policy of the Church of Rome*, 2nd ed. 1830, p. 176), and the same proposition was maintained in 1850 by a Roman cardinal. See *Galileo e l'Inquisizione*, by Monsignor Marini, Roma, 1850, pp. 1, 53-54, etc. Had Galileo really taught as is there asserted, he would only have been assenting to what his priestly opponents constantly dinned in his ears. But in point of fact he had not so assented; for in his letter to Castelli (see Gebler, pp. 46-50) he had earnestly deprecated the argument from the Bible, urging that, though Scripture could not err, its interpreters might misunderstand it; and even going so far as to argue, with much ingenuity, that the story of Joshua, literally interpreted, could be made to harmonize with the Copernican theory, but not at all with the Ptolemaic.

The thesis revived by Monsignor Marini deserves to rank as the highest flight of absurdity and effrontery in the entire discussion (cp. Berti, *Giordano Bruno*, 1889, p. 306, note). Every step in both procedures of the Inquisition insists on the falsity and the anti-scriptural character of the doctrine that the earth moves round the sun (see Berti, *Il Processo*, p. 115 sq.; Gebler, pp. 76-77, 230-34); and never once is it hinted that Galileo's error lay in ascribing to the Bible the doctrine of the earth's fixity. In the Roman *Index* of 1664 the works of Galileo and Copernicus are alike vetoed, with all other writings affirming the movement of the earth and the stability of the sun; and in the *Index* of 1704 are included *libri omnes docentes mobilitatem terrae et immobilitatem solis* (Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome*, 1906-1907, i, 308, 312).

The stories of his being tortured and blinded, and saying "Still it moves," are indeed myths.<sup>1</sup> The broken-spirited old man was in no mood so to speak; he was, moreover, in all respects save his science, an orthodox Catholic,<sup>2</sup> and as such not likely to defy the Church to its face. In reality he was formally in the custody of the Inquisition—and this not in a cell, but in the house of an official—for only twenty-two days. After the sentence he was again formally detained for some seventeen days in the Villa Medici, but was then allowed to return to his own rural home at Acetri,<sup>3</sup> on condition that he lived in solitude, receiving no visitors. He was

<sup>1</sup> Gebler, pp. 249-63; *Private Life*, pp. 255-56; Marini, pp. 55-57. The "e pur si muove" story is first heard of in 1774. As to the torture, it is to be remembered that Galileo recanted under threat of it. See Berti, pp. 93-101; Marini, p. 59; Sir O. Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, 1893, pp. 128-31. Berti argues that only the special humanity of the Commissary-General, Macolano, saved him from the torture. Cp. Gebler, p. 259, note.

<sup>2</sup> Gebler, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *Private Life*, pp. 265-60, 268; Gebler, p. 252.



thus much more truly a prisoner than the so-called "prisoner of the Vatican" in our own day. The worst part of the sentence, however, was the placing of all his works, published and unpublished, on the *Index Expurgatorius*, and the gag, thus laid on all utterance of rational scientific thought in Italy—an evil of incalculable influence. "The lack of liberty and speculation," writes a careful Italian student, "was the cause of the death first of the Accademia dei Lincei, an institution unique in its time; then of the Accademia del Cimento. Thus Italy, after the marvellous period of vigorous native civilization in the thirteenth century, after a second period of civilization less native but still its own, as being Latin, saw itself arrested on the threshold of a third and not less splendid period. Vexations and prohibitions expelled courage, spontaneity, and universality from the national mind; literary style became uncertain, indeterminate; and, forbidden to treat of government, science, or religion, turned to things frivolous and fruitless. For the great academies, instituted to renovate and further the study of natural philosophy, were substituted small ones without any such aim. Intellectual energy, the love of research and of objective truth, greatness of feeling and nobility of character, all suffered. Nothing so injures a people as the compulsion to express or conceal its thought solely from motives of fear. The nation in which those conditions were set up became intellectually inferior to those in which it was possible to pass freely in the vast regions of knowledge. Her culture grew restricted, devoid of originality, vaporous, umbratile; there arose habits of servility and dissimulation; great books, great men, great purposes were denaturalized."<sup>1</sup>

It was thus in the other countries of Europe that Galileo's teaching bore its fruit, for he speedily got his condemned Dialogues published in Latin by the Elzevirs; and in 1638, also at the hands of the Elzevirs, appeared his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* [i.e., of mechanics and motion], the "foundation of mechanical physics." By this time he was totally blind, and then only, when physicians could not help him save by prolonging his life, was he allowed to live under strict surveillance in Florence, needing a special indulgence from the Inquisition to permit him even to go to church at Easter. The desire of his last blind days, to have with him his best-beloved pupil, Father Castelli, was granted only under rigid limitation and supervision, though even the papacy could not keep from him the

<sup>1</sup> Berti, *Il Processo di Galileo*, pp. 111-12.

plaudits of the thinkers of Europe. Finally he passed away in his rural "prison"—after five years of blindness—in 1642, the year of Newton's birth. At that time his doctrines were under anathema in Italy, and known elsewhere only to a few. Hobbes in 1634 tried in vain to procure for the Earl of Newcastle a copy of the earlier *Dialogues* in London, and wrote: "It is not possible to get it for money. ....I hear say it is called-in, in Italy, as a book that will do more hurt to their religion than all the books of Luther and Calvin, such opposition they think is between their religion and natural reason."<sup>1</sup> Not till 1757 did the papacy permit other books teaching the Copernican system; in 1765 Galileo was still under ban; not until 1822 was permission given to treat the theory as true; and not until 1835 was the work of Copernicus withdrawn from the *Index*.<sup>2</sup>

While modern science was thus being placed on its special basis, a continuous resistance was being made in the schools to the dogmatism which held the mutilated lore of Aristotle as the sum of human wisdom. Like the ecclesiastical revolution, this had been protracted through centuries. Aristotelianism, whether theistic or pantheistic, whether orthodox or heterodox,<sup>3</sup> had become a dogmatism like another, a code that vetoed revision, a fetter laid on the mind. Even as a negation of Christian superstition it had become impotent, for the Peripatetics were not only ready to make common cause with the Jesuits against Galileo, as we have seen; some of them were content even to join in the appeal to the Bible.<sup>4</sup> The result of such uncritical partisanship was that the immense service of Aristotle to mental life—the comprehensive grasp which gave him his long supremacy as against rival system-makers, and makes him still so much more important than any of the thinkers who in the sixteenth century revolted against him—was by opponents disregarded and denied, though the range and depth of his influence are apparent in all the polemic against him, notably in that of Bacon, who is constantly citing him, and relates his reasoning to him, however antagonistically, at every turn.

Naturally, the less sacrosanct dogmatism was the more freely

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Hobbes to Newcastle, in *Report of the Hist. Mss. Comm. on the Duke of Portland's Papers*, 1892, ii. Hobbes explains that few copies were brought over, "and they that buy such books are not such men as to part with them again." "I doubt not," he adds, "but the translation of it will here be publicly embraced."

<sup>2</sup> Gebler, pp. 312-15; Putnam, *Censorship of the Church of Rome*, i, 313-14.

<sup>3</sup> See Ueberweg, ii, 12, as to the conflicting types. In addition to Cremonini, several leading Aristotelians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were accused of atheism (Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* ii, 101-102), the old charge against the Peripatetic school. Hallam (p. 102) complains that CESALPINI of Pisa "substitutes the barren unity of pantheism for religion." Cp. Ueberweg, ii, 14; Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. p. 417. An Averroist on some points, he believed in separate immortality.

<sup>4</sup> Gebler, pp. 37, 45. Gebler appears to surmise that Cremonini may have escaped the attack upon himself by turning suspicion upon Galileo, but as to this there is no evidence.



assailed; and in the sixteenth century the attacks became numerous and vehement. Luther was a furious anti-Aristotelian,<sup>1</sup> as were also some Calvinists; but in 1570 we find Beza declaring to Ramus<sup>2</sup> that "the Genevese have decreed, once and for ever, that they will never, neither in logic nor in any other branch of learning, turn away from the teaching of Aristotle." At Oxford the same code held.<sup>3</sup> In Italy, Telesio, who notably anticipates the tone of Bacon as to natural science, and is largely followed by him, influenced Bruno in the anti-Aristotelian direction,<sup>4</sup> though it was in a long line from Aristotle that he got his principle of the eternity of the universe. The Spaniard Ludovicus Vives, too (1492-1540), pronounced by Lange one of the clearest heads of his age, had insisted on progress beyond Aristotle in the spirit of naturalist science.<sup>5</sup> But the typical anti-Aristotelian of the century was RAMUS (Pierre de la Ramée, 1515-1572), whose long and strenuous battle against the ruling school at Paris brought him to his death in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.<sup>6</sup> Ramus hardily laid it down that "there is no authority over reason, but reason ought to be queen and ruler over authority."<sup>7</sup> Such a message was of more value than his imperfect attempt to supersede the Aristotelian logic. Bacon, who carried on in England the warfare against the Aristotelian tradition, never ventured so to express himself as against the theological tyranny in particular, though, as we have seen, the general energy and vividness of his argumentation gave him an influence which undermined the orthodoxies to which he professed to conform. On the other hand, he did no such service to exact science as was rendered in his day by Kepler and Galileo and their English emulators; and his full didactic influence came much later into play.

Like fallacies to Bacon's may be found in DESCARTES, whose seventeenth-century reputation as a champion of theism proved mainly the eagerness of theists for a plausible defence. Already in his own day his arguments were logically confuted by both Gassendi and Hobbes; and his partial success with theists was a success of partisanism. It was primarily in respect of his habitual appeal to reason and argument, in disregard of the assumptions of faith, and secondarily in respect of his real scientific work, that he counts

<sup>1</sup> Ueberweg, ii, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. 36.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Mater.* i, 189-90 (Eng. tr. i, 228). Born in Valencia and trained at Paris, Vives became a humanist teacher at Louvain, and was called to England (1523) to be tutor to the Princess Mary. During his stay he taught at Oxford. Being opposed to the divorce of Henry VIII, he was imprisoned for a time, afterwards living at Bruges.

<sup>6</sup> See the monograph, *Ramus, sa vie, ses écrits, et ses opinions*, par Ch. Waddington, 1855. Owen has a good account of Ramus in his *French Skeptics*.

<sup>7</sup> *Scholæ math.* i, iii, p. 78, cited by Waddington, p. 343.

for freethought. Ultimately his method undermined his creed; and it is not too much to say of him that, next to Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo,<sup>1</sup> he laid a good part of the foundation of modern philosophy and science,<sup>2</sup> Gassendi largely aiding. Though he never does justice to Galileo, from his fear of provoking the Church, it can hardly be doubted that he owes to him in large part the early determination of his mind to scientific methods; for it is difficult to believe that the account he gives of his mental development in the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) is biographically true. It is rather the schemed statement, by a ripened mind, of how it might best have been developed. Nor did Descartes, any more than Bacon, live up to the intellectual idea he had framed. All through his life he anxiously sought to propitiate the Church;<sup>3</sup> and his scientific as well as his philosophic work was hampered in consequence. In England Henry More, who latterly recoiled from his philosophy, still thought his physics had been spoiled by fear of the Church, declaring that the imprisonment of Galileo "frighted Des Cartes into such a distorted description of motion that no man's reason could make good sense of it, nor modesty permit him to fancy anything nonsense in so excellent an author."<sup>4</sup>

But nonetheless the unusual rationalism of Descartes's method, avowedly aiming at the uprooting of all his own prejudices<sup>5</sup> as a first step to truth, displeased the Jesuits, and could not escape the hostile attention of the Protestant theologians of Holland, where Descartes passed so many years of his life. Despite his constant theism, accordingly, he had at length to withdraw.<sup>6</sup> A Jesuit, Père Bourdin, sought to have the *Discours de la Méthode* at once condemned by the French clergy, but the attempt failed for the time being. France was just then, in fact, the most freethinking part of Europe;<sup>7</sup> and Descartes, though not so unsparing with his prejudices as he set out to be, was the greatest innovator in philosophy that had arisen in the Christian era. He made real scientific discoveries,

<sup>1</sup> "In many respects Galileo deserves to be ranked with Descartes as inaugurating modern philosophy." Prof. Adamson, *Development of Mod. Philos.* 1903, i, 5. "We may compare his [Hobbes's] thought with Descartes's, but the impulse came to him from the physical reasonings of Galileo." Prof. Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, 1886, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 327-36; 3-vol. ed. ii, 77-85. Cp. Lange, i, 425 (Eng. tr. i, 248, note); Adamson, *Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Lange, i, 425 (Eng. tr. i, 248-49, note); Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 40-47, 185-86; Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 354-55; Memoir in Garnier ed. of *Œuvres Choiesies*, p. v, also pp. 6, 17, 19, 21. Bossuet pronounced the precautions of Descartes excessive. But cp. Dr. Land's notes in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1882, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, ed. 1712, pref. p. xi.

<sup>5</sup> *Discours de la Méthode*, pties. i, ii, iii, iv (*Œuvres Choiesies*, pp. 8, 10, 11, 22, 24); *Meditation I* (id. pp. 73-74).

<sup>6</sup> Full details in Kuno Fischer's *Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, bk. i, ch. vi; Bouillier, i, chs. xii, xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 337-39; 3-vol. ed. ii, 94, 97.



too, where Bacon only inspired an approach and schemed a wandering road to them. He first effectively applied algebra to geometry; he first scientifically explained the rainbow; he at once accepted and founded on Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which most physiologists of the day derided; and he welcomed Aselli's discovery of the lacteals, which was rejected by Harvey.<sup>1</sup> And though as regards religion his timorous conformities deprive him of any heroic status, it is perhaps not too much to pronounce him "the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect."<sup>2</sup> One not given to warm sympathy with freethought has avowed that "the common root of modern philosophy is the doubt which is alike Baconian and Cartesian."<sup>3</sup>

Only less important, in some regards, was the influence of Pierre Gassend or GASSENDI (1592-1655), who, living his life as a canon of the Church, reverted in his doctrine to the philosophy of Epicurus, alike in physics and ethics.<sup>4</sup> It seems clear that he never had any religious leanings, but simply entered the Church on the advice of friends who pointed out to him how much better a provision it gave, in income and leisure, than the professorship he held in his youth at the university of Aix.<sup>5</sup> Professing like Descartes a strict submission to the Church, he yet set forth a theory of things which had in all ages been recognized as fundamentally irreconcilable with the Christian creed; and his substantial exemption from penalties is to be set down to his position, his prudence, and his careful conformities. The correspondent of Galileo and Kepler, he was the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Naudé; and Gui Patin was his physician and intimate.<sup>6</sup> Strong as a physicist and astronomer where Descartes was weak, he divides with him and Galileo the credit of practically renewing natural philosophy; Newton being Gassendist rather than Cartesian.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Gassendi's youthful attack on the Aristotelian physics (1624) makes him the predecessor of Descartes; and he expressly opposed his contemporary on points of physics and metaphysics on which he thought him chimerical, and so promoted unbelief where Descartes

<sup>1</sup> Buckle, pp. 327-30; ii, 81. <sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 330; ii, 82. The process is traced hereinafter.

<sup>3</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> For an exact summary and criticism of Gassendi's positions see the masterly monograph of Prof. Brett of Lahore, *The Philosophy of Gassendi*, 1906—a real contribution to the history of philosophy.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i (McCulloch's ed. 1839, pp. 364-65). It is told of him, with doubtful authority, that when dying he said: "I know not who brought me into the world, neither do I know what was to do there, nor why I go out of it." *Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*, by Deslandes (Eng. tr. of the *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*), 1713, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> For a good account of Gassendi and his group (founded on Lange, § iii, ch. i) see Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. de matérialisme*, ptie. iii, ch. ii.

<sup>7</sup> Voltaire, *Éléments de philos. de Newton*, ch. ii; Lange, i, 232 (Eng. tr. i, 267) and 269.

made for orthodoxy.<sup>1</sup> Of the criticisms on his *Méditations* to which Descartes published replies, those of Gassendi are, with the partial exception of those of Hobbes, distinctly the most searching and sustained. The later position of Hume, indeed, is explicitly taken up in the first objection of Cratérus;<sup>2</sup> but the persistent pressure of Gassendi on the theistic and spiritistic assumptions of Descartes reads like the reasoning of a modern atheist.<sup>3</sup> Yet the works of Descartes were in time placed on the *Index*, condemned by the king's council, and even vetoed in the universities, while those of Gassendi were not, though his early work on Aristotelianism had to be stopped after the first volume because of the anger it aroused.<sup>4</sup> Himself one of the most abstemious of men,<sup>5</sup> like his master Epicurus (of whom he wrote a Life, 1647), he attracted disciples of another temperamental cast as well as many of his own; and as usual his system is associated with the former, who are duly vilified by orthodoxy, although certainly no worse than the average orthodox.

Among his other practical services to rationalism was a curious experiment, made in a village of the Lower Alps, by way of investigating the doctrine of witchcraft. A drug prepared by one sorcerer was administered to others of the craft in presence of witnesses. It threw them into a deep sleep, on awakening from which they declared that they had been at a witches' Sabbath. As they had never left their beds, the experiment went far to discredit the superstition.<sup>6</sup> One significant result of the experiment was seen in the course later taken by Colbert in overriding a decision of the Parlement of Rouen as to witchcraft (1670). That Parlement proposed to burn fourteen sorcerers. Colbert, who had doubtless read Montaigne as well as Gassendi, gave Montaigne's prescription that the culprits should be dosed with hellebore—a medicine for brain disturbance.<sup>7</sup> In 1672, finally, the king issued a declaration forbidding the tribunals to admit charges of mere sorcery;<sup>8</sup> and any future condemnations were on the score of blasphemy and poisoning. Yet further, in the section of his posthumous *Syntagma Philosophicum* (1658) entitled *De Effectibus Siderum*,<sup>9</sup> Gassendi dealt the

<sup>1</sup> Bayle, art. POMPONACE, Notes F. and G. The complaint was made by Arnauld, who with the rest of the Jansenists was substantially a Cartesian.

<sup>2</sup> See it in Garnier's ed. of Descartes's *Œuvres Choiesies*, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 158-64.

<sup>4</sup> Apparently just because the Jansenists adopted Descartes and opposed Gassendi. But Gassendi is extremely guarded in all his statements, save, indeed, in his objections to the *Méditations* of Descartes.

<sup>5</sup> See Soury, pp. 397-98, as to a water-drinking "debauch" of Gassendi and his friends.

<sup>6</sup> Rambaud, as cited, p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 155.

<sup>8</sup> Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ed. Didot, p. 366. "On ne l'eût pas osé sous Henri IV et sous Louis XIII," adds Voltaire. Cp. Michelet, *La Sorcière*, éd. Séailles, 1903, p. 302.

<sup>9</sup> Tr. into English in 1659, under the title *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*.



first great blow on the rationalist side to the venerable creed of astrology, assailed often, but to little purpose, from the side of faith; bringing to his task, indeed, more asperity than he is commonly credited with, but also a stringent scientific and logical method, lacking in the polemic of the churchmen, who had attacked astrology mainly because it ignored revelation. It is sobering to remember, however, that he was one of those who could not assimilate Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which Descartes at once adopted and propounded.

Such anomalies meet us many times in the history of scientific as of other lines of thought; and the residual lesson is the recognition that progress is infinitely multiplex in its causation. Nothing is more vital in this regard than scientific truth, which is as a lighthouse in seas of speculation; and those who, like Galileo and Descartes, add to the world's exact knowledge, perform a specific service not matched by that of the Bacons, who urge right method without applying it. Yet in that kind also an incalculable influence has been wielded. Many minds can accept scientific truths without being thereby led to scientific ways of thought; and thus the reasoners and speculators, the Brunos and the Vaninis, play their fruitful part, as do the mentors who turn men's eyes on their own vices of intellectual habit. And in respect of creeds and philosophies, finally, it is not so much sheer soundness of result as educativeness of method, effectual appeal to the thinking faculty and to the spirit of reason, that determines a thinker's influence. This kind of impact we shall find historically to be the service done by Descartes to European thought for a hundred years.

From Descartes, then, as regards philosophy, more than from any professed thinker of his day, but also from the other thinkers we have noted, from the reactions of scientific discovery, from the terrible experience of the potency of religion as a breeder of strife and its impotence as a curber of evil, and from the practical free-thinking of the more open-minded of that age in general, derives the great rationalistic movement, which, taking clear literary form first in the seventeenth century, has with some fluctuations broadened and deepened down to our own day.

## CHAPTER XIV

## BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

## § 1

THE propagandist literature of deism begins with an English diplomatist, Lord HERBERT of Cherbury, the friend of Bacon, who stood in the full stream of the current freethought of England and France<sup>1</sup> in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. English deism, as literature, is thus at its very outset affiliated with French; all of its elements, critical and ethical, are germinal in Bodin, Montaigne, and Charron, each and all of whom had a direct influence on English thought; and we shall find later French thought, as in the cases of Gassendi, Bayle, Simon, St. Evremond, and Voltaire, alternately influenced by and reacting on English. But, apart from the undeveloped rationalism of the Elizabethan period, which never found literary expression, the French ferment seems to have given the first effective impulse; though it is to be remembered that about the same time the wars of religion in Germany, following on an age of theological uproar, had developed a common temper of indifference which would react on the thinking of men of affairs in France.

We have seen the state of upper-class and middle-class opinion in France about 1624. It was in Paris in that year that Herbert published his *De Veritate*, after acting for five years as the English ambassador at the French court—an office from which he was recalled in the same year.<sup>2</sup> By his own account the book had been "begun by me in England, and formed there in all its principal parts,"<sup>3</sup> but finished at Paris. He had, however, gone to France in 1608, and had served in various continental wars in the years following; and it was presumably in these years, not in his youth in England, that he had formed the remarkable opinions set forth in his epoch-making book.

<sup>1</sup> Jenkin Thomasius in his *Historia Atheismi* (1692) joins Herbert with Bodin as having five points in common with him (ed. 1709, ch. ix, § 2, pp. 76-77).

<sup>2</sup> It might have been supposed that he was recalled on account of his book; but it was not so. He was recalled by letter in April, returned home in July, and seems to have sent his book thence to Paris to be printed.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, Sir S. Lee's 2nd ed. p. 132.



Hitherto deism had been represented by unpublished arguments disingenuously dealt with in published answers; henceforth there slowly grows up a deistic literature. Herbert was a powerful and audacious nobleman, with a weak king; and he could venture on a publication which would have cost an ordinary man dear. Yet even he saw fit to publish in Latin; and he avowed hesitations.<sup>1</sup> The most puzzling thing about it is his declaration that Grotius and the German theologian Tielenus, having read the book in MS., exhorted him "earnestly to print and publish it." It is difficult to believe that they had gathered its substance. Herbert's work has two aspects, a philosophical and a political, and in both it is remarkable.<sup>2</sup> Like the *Discours de la Méthode* of Descartes, which was to appear thirteen years later, it is inspired by an original determination to get at the rational grounds of conviction; and in Herbert's case the overweening self-esteem which disfigures his *Autobiography* seems to have been motive force for the production of a book signally recalcitrant to authority. Where Bacon attacks Aristotelianism and the habits of mind it had engendered, Herbert counters the whole conception of revelation in religion. Rejecting tacitly the theological basis of current philosophy, he divides the human mind into four faculties—Natural Instinct, Internal Sense, External Sense, and the Discursive faculty—through one or other of which all our knowledge emerges. Of course, like Descartes, he makes the first the verification of his idea of God, pronouncing that to be primary, independent, and universally entertained, and therefore not lawfully to be disputed (already a contradiction in terms); but, inasmuch as scriptural revelation has no place in the process, the position is conspicuously more advanced than that of Bacon in the *De Augmentis*, published the year before, and even than that of Locke, sixty years later. On the question of concrete religion Herbert is still more aggressive. His argument<sup>3</sup> is, in brief, that no professed revelation can have a decisive claim to rational acceptance; that none escapes sectarian dispute in its own field; that, as each one misses most of the human race, none seems to be divine; and that human reason can do for morals all that any one of them does. The negative generalities of Montaigne here pass into a positive anti-Christian argument; for Herbert goes on to pronounce the doctrine of forgiveness for faith immoral.

<sup>1</sup> The book was reprinted at London in Latin in 1633; again at Paris in 1636; and again at London in 1645. It was translated and published in French in 1639, but never in English.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the verdict of Hamilton in his ed. of Reid, note A, § 6, 35 (p. 781).

<sup>3</sup> For a good analysis see Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. trans. 1887, pp. 292-99; also Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Bern, 1853, i, 17-40; and Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, pp. 36-54.

Like all pioneers, Herbert falls into some inconsistencies on his own part; the most flagrant being his claim to have had a sign from heaven—that is, a private and special revelation—encouraging him to publish his book.<sup>1</sup> But his criticism is nonetheless telling and persuasive so far as it goes, and remains valid to this day. Nor do his later and posthumous works<sup>2</sup> add to it in essentials, though they do much to construct the deistic case on historical lines. The *De religione gentilium* in particular is a noteworthy study of pre-Christian religions, apparently motivated by doubt or challenge as to his theorem of the universality of the God-idea. It proves only racial universality without agreement; but it is so far a scholarly beginning of rational hierology. The English *Dialogue between a Teacher and his Pupil*, which seems to have been the first form of the *Religio Gentilium*,<sup>3</sup> is a characteristic expression of his whole way of thought, and was doubtless left unpublished for the prudential reasons which led him to put all his published works in Latin. But the fact that the Latin quotations are translated shows that the book had been planned for publication—a risk which he did wisely to shun. The remarkable thing is that his Latin books were so little debated, the *De Veritate* being nowhere discussed before Culverwel.<sup>4</sup> Baxter in 1672 could say that Herbert, "never having been answered, might be thought unanswerable";<sup>5</sup> and his own "answer" is merely theological.

The next great freethinking figure in England is THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679), the most important thinker of his age, after Descartes, and hardly less influential. But the purpose of Hobbes being always substantially political and regulative, his unfaith in the current religion is only incidentally revealed in the writings in which he seeks to show the need for keeping it under monarchic control.<sup>6</sup> Hobbes is in fact the anti-Presbyterian or anti-Puritan philosopher; and to discredit anarchic religion in the eyes of the majority he is obliged to speak as a judicial Churchman. Yet nothing is more certain than that he was no orthodox Christian;

<sup>1</sup> See his *Autobiography*, as cited, pp. 133-34.

<sup>2</sup> *De causis errorum, una cum tractate de religione laici et appendice ad sacerdotes* (1645); *De religione gentilium* (1663). The latter was translated into English in 1705. The former are short appendices to the *De Veritate*. In 1768 was published for the first time from a manuscript, *A Dialogue between a Tutor and his Pupil*, which, despite the doubts of Lechler, may confidently be pronounced Herbert's from internal evidence. See the "Advertisement" by the editor of the volume, and cp. Lee, p. xxx, and notes there referred to. The "five points," in particular, occur not only in the *Religio Gentilium*, but in the *De Veritate*. The style is clearly of the seventeenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Sidney Lee can hardly be right in taking the *Dialogue* to be the "little treatise" which Herbert proposed to write on behaviour (*Autobiography*, Lee's 2nd ed. p. 43). It does not answer to that description, being rather an elaborate discussion of the themes of Herbert's main treatises, running to 272 quarto pages.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*, 1672, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> It is to be remembered that the doctrine of the supremacy of the civil power in religious matters (Erastianism) was maintained by some of the ablest men on the Parliamentary side, in particular Selden.



and even his professed theism resolves itself somewhat easily into virtual agnosticism on logical pressure. No thought of prudence could withhold him from showing, in a discussion on words, that he held the doctrine of the *Logos* to be meaningless.<sup>1</sup> Of atheism he was repeatedly accused by both royalists and rebels; and his answer was forensic rather than fervent, alike as to his scripturalism, his Christianity, and his impersonal conception of Deity.<sup>2</sup> Reviving as he did the ancient rationalistic doctrine of the eternity of the world,<sup>3</sup> he gave a clear footing for atheism as against the Judæo-Christian view. In affirming "one God eternal" of whom men "cannot have any idea in their mind, answerable to his nature," he was negating all creeds. He expressly contends, it is true, for the principle of a Providence; but it is hard to believe that he laid any store by prayer, public or private; and it would appear that whatever thoughtful atheism there was in England in the latter part of the century looked to him as its philosopher, insofar as it did not derive from Spinoza.<sup>4</sup> Nor could the Naturalist school of that day desire a better, terser, or more drastic scientific definition of religion than Hobbes gave them: "Fear of power invisible, feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed, RELIGION; not allowed, SUPERSTITION."<sup>5</sup> As the Churchmen readily saw, his insistence on identifying the religion of a country with its law plainly implied that no religion is any more "revealed" than another. With him too begins (1651) the public criticism of the Bible on literary or documentary grounds;<sup>6</sup> though, as we have seen, this had already gone far in private;<sup>7</sup> and he gave a new lead, partly as against Descartes, to a materialistic philosophy.<sup>8</sup> His replies to the theistic and spiritistic reasonings of Descartes's *Meditations* are, like those of Gassendi, unrefuted and irrefutable; and they are fundamentally materialistic in their drift.<sup>9</sup> He was, in fact, in a special and peculiar degree for his age, a freethinker; and so deep was his intellectual hostility to the clergy of all species that he could not forego enraging those of his own political side by his sarcasms.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, ch. iv, H. Morley's ed. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. his letter to an opponent, *Considerations upon the Reputation, etc., of Thomas Hobbes*, 1680, with chs. xi and xii of *Leviathan*, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6. One of his most explicit declarations for theism is in the *De Homine*, c. 1, where he employs the design argument, declaring that he who will not see that the bodily organs are a *mente aliqua condita ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia* must be himself without mind. This ascription of "mind," however, he tacitly negates in *Leviathan*, ch. xi, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Bentley's letter to Bernard, 1692, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>4</sup> *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. vi. Morley's ed. p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Above, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> On this see Lange, *Hist. of Materialism*, sec. iii, ch. ii.

<sup>7</sup> Molyneux, an anti-Hobbesian, in translating Hobbes's objections along with the *Meditations* (1680) claims that the slightness of Descartes's replies was due to his unacquaintance with Hobbes's works and philosophy in general (trans. cited, p. 114). This is an obviously lame defence. Descartes does parry some of the thrusts of Hobbes; others he simply cannot meet.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., *Leviathan*, pt. iv, ch. xlvii.

Here he is in marked contrast with Descartes, who dissembled his opinion about Copernicus and Galileo for peace' sake,<sup>1</sup> and was the close friend of the apologist Mersenne down to his death.<sup>2</sup>

With the partial exception of the more refined and graceful Pecoek, Hobbes has of all English thinkers down to his period the clearest and hardest head for all purposes of reasoning, save in the single field of mathematics, where he meddled without mastery; and against the theologians of his time his argumentation is as a two-edged sword. That such a man should have been resolutely on the side of the king in the Civil War is one of the proofs of the essential fanaticism and arbitrariness of the orthodox Puritans, who plotted more harm to the heresies they disliked than was ever wreaked on themselves. Hobbes came near enough being clerically ostracized among the royalists; but among the earlier Puritans, or under an Independent Puritan Parliament at any time, he would have stood a fair chance of execution. It was doubtless largely due to the anti-persecuting influence of Cromwell, as well as to his having ostensibly deserted the royalists, that Hobbes was allowed to settle quietly in England after making his submission to the Rump Parliament in 1651. In 1666 his *Leviathan* and *De Cive* were together condemned by the Restoration Parliament in its grotesque panic of piety after the Great Fire of London; and it was actually proposed to revive against him the writ *de heretico comburendo*;<sup>3</sup> but Charles II protected and pensioned him, though he was forbidden to publish anything further on burning questions, and *Leviathan* was not permitted in his lifetime to be republished in English.<sup>4</sup> He was thus for his generation the typical "infidel," the royalist clergy being perhaps his bitterest enemies. His spontaneous hostility to fanaticism shaped his literary career, which began in 1628 with a translation of Thucydides, undertaken by way of showing the dangers of democracy. Next came the *De Cive* (Paris, 1642), written when he was already an elderly man; and thenceforth the Civil War tinges his whole temper.

It is in fact by way of a revolt against all theological ethic, as demonstrably a source of civil anarchy, that Hobbes formulates

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 232-35. Cp. Bentley, *Sermons on Atheism* (i.e., his Boyle Lectures), ed. 1724, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes also was of Mersenne's acquaintance, but only as a man of science. When, in 1647, Hobbes was believed to be dying, Mersenne for the first time sought to discuss theology with him; but the sick man instantly changed the subject. In 1648 Mersenne died. He thus did not live to meet the strain of *Leviathan* (1651), which enraged the French no less than the English clergy. (Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 63-65.)

<sup>3</sup> Hobbes lived to see this law abolished (1677). There was left, however, the jurisdiction of the bishops and ecclesiastical courts over cases of atheism, blasphemy, heresy, and schism, short of the death penalty.

<sup>4</sup> Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 196; Pepys's Diary, Sept. 3, 1668.



a strictly civic or legalist ethic, denying the supremacy of an abstract or a priori natural moral law (though he founded on natural law), as well as rejecting all supernatural illumination of the conscience.<sup>1</sup> In the Church of Rome itself there had inevitably arisen the practice of Casuistry, in which to a certain extent ethics had to be rationally studied; and early Protestant Casuistry, repudiating the authority of the priest, had to rely still more on reason.

Compare Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 25-38, where it is affirmed that, after the Reformation, "Since the assertions of the teacher had no inherent authority, he was obliged to give his proofs as well as his results," and "the determination of cases was replaced by the discipline of conscience" (p. 29). There is an interesting progression in English Protestant casuistry from W. Perkins (1558-1602) and W. Ames (pub. 1630), through Bishops Hall and Sanderson, to Jeremy Taylor. Mosheim (17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, § 9) pronounces Ames "the first among the Reformed who attempted to elucidate and arrange the science of morals as distinct from that of dogmatics." See biog. notes on Perkins and Ames in Whewell, pp. 27-29, and Reid's Mosheim, p. 681.

But Hobbes passed in two strides to the position that natural morality is a set of demonstrable inferences as to what adjustments promote general well-being; and further that there is no practical code of right and wrong apart from positive social law.<sup>2</sup> He thus practically introduced once for all into modern Christendom the fundamental dilemma of rationalistic ethics, not only positing the problem for his age,<sup>3</sup> but anticipating it as handled in later times.<sup>4</sup>

How far his rationalism was ahead of that of his age may be realized by comparing his positions with those of John Selden, the most learned and, outside of philosophy, one of the shrewdest of the men of that generation. Selden was sometimes spoken of by the Hobbists as a freethinker; and his *Table Talk* contains some sallies which would startle the orthodox if publicly delivered;<sup>5</sup> but not only is there explicit testimony by his associates as to his orthodoxy:<sup>6</sup> his own treatise, *De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum*, maintains the ground that the "Law of Nature" which underlies the variants of the Laws of Nations is limited to the

<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, ch. ii; Morley's ed. p. 19; chs. xiv, xv, pp. 66, 71, 72, 78; ch. xxix, pp. 148, 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Leviathan*, chs. xv, xvii, xviii. Morley's ed. pp. 72, 82, 83, 85.

<sup>3</sup> "For two generations the effort to construct morality on a philosophical basis takes more or less the form of answers to Hobbes" (Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 3rd ed. p. 169).

<sup>4</sup> As when he presents the law of Nature as "dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes" (*Leviathan*, ch. xv. Morley's ed. p. 77).

<sup>5</sup> See the headings, COUNCIL, RELIGION, etc.

<sup>6</sup> G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 348, 362.

precepts and traditions set forth in the Talmud as delivered by Noah to his posterity.<sup>1</sup> Le Clerc said of the work, justly enough, that in it "Selden only copies the Rabbins, and scarcely ever reasons." It is likely enough that the furious outcry against Selden for his strictly historical investigation of tithes, and the humiliation of apology forced upon him in that connection in 1618,<sup>2</sup> made him specially chary ever afterwards of any semblance of a denial of the plenary truth of theological tradition; but there is no reason to think that he had ever really transcended the Biblical view of the world's order. He illustrates, in fact, the extent to which a scholar could in that day be anti-clerical without being rationalistic. Like the bulk of the Parliamentarians, though without their fanaticism, he was thoroughly opposed to the political pretensions of the Church,<sup>3</sup> desiring however to leave episcopacy alone, as a matter outside of legislation, when the House of Commons abolished it. Yet he spoke of the name of Puritan as one which he "trusted he was not either mad enough or foolish enough to deserve."<sup>4</sup> There were thus in the Parliamentary party men of very different shades of opinion. The largest party, perhaps, was that of the fanatics who, as Mrs. Hutchinson—herself fanatical enough—tells concerning her husband, "would not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cut."<sup>5</sup> Next in strength were the more or less orthodox but anti-clerical and less pious Scripturalists, of whom Selden was the most illustrious. By far the smallest group of all were the freethinkers, men of their type being as often repelled by the zealotry of the Puritans as by the sacerdotalism of the State clergy. The Rebellion, in short, though it evoked rationalism, was not evoked by it. Like all religious strifes—like the vaster Thirty Years' War in contemporary Germany—it generated both doubt and indifferentism in men who would otherwise have remained undisturbed in orthodoxy.

## § 2

When, however, we turn from the higher literary propaganda to the verbal and other transitory debates of the period of the Rebellion, we realize how much partial rationalism had hitherto subsisted without notice. In that immense ferment some very advanced opinions, such as quasi-Anarchism in politics<sup>6</sup> and anti-

<sup>1</sup> G. W. Johnson, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> G. W. Johnson, pp. 258, 302.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 302. Cp. in the *Table Talk*, art. TRINITY, his view of the Roundheads.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. 1810, i, 181. Cp. i, 292; ii, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Overton's pamphlet, *An Arrow against all Tyrants and Tyranny* (1646), cited in the *History of Passive Obedience since the Reformation*, 1689, i, 59; pt. ii of Thomas



Scripturalism in religion, were more or less directly professed. In January, 1646 (N.S.), the authorities of the City of London, alarmed at the unheard-of amount of discussion, petitioned Parliament to put down all private meetings;<sup>1</sup> and on February 6, 1646 (N.S.), a solemn fast, or "day of publique humiliation," was proclaimed on the score of the increase of "errors, heresies, and blasphemies." On the same grounds, the Presbyterian party in Parliament pressed an "Ordinance for the suppression of Blasphemies and Heresies," which, long held back by Vane and Cromwell, was carried in their despite in 1648, by large majorities, when the royalists renewed hostilities. It enacted the death penalty against all who should deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, a day of judgment, or a future state; and prescribed imprisonment for Arminianism, rejection of infant baptism, anti-Sabbatarianism, anti-Presbyterianism, or defence of the doctrine of Purgatory or the use of images.<sup>2</sup> And of aggressive heresy there are some noteworthy traces. In a pamphlet entitled "*Hell Broke Loose: a Catalogue of the many spreading Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these Times, for which we are to be humbled*" (March 9, 1646, N.S.), the first entry—and in the similar Catalogue in Edwards's *Gangræna*, the second entry—is a citation of the notable thesis, "That the Scripture, whether a true manuscript or no, whether Hebrew, Greek, or English, is but humane, and not able to discover a divine God."<sup>3</sup> This is cited from "The Pilgrimage of the Saints, by Lawrence Clarkson," presumably the Lawrence Clarkson who for his book *The Single Eye* was sentenced by resolution of Parliament on September 27, 1650, to be imprisoned, the book being burned by the common hangman.<sup>4</sup> He is further cited as teaching that even unbaptized persons may preach and baptize. Of the other heresies cited the principal is the old denial of a future life, and especially of a physical and future hell. In general the heresy is pietistic or antinomian; but we have also the declaration "that right Reason is the rule of Faith, and that we are to believe the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, so far as we

Edwards's *Gangræna: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time, etc.*, 2nd ed. 1646, pp. 33-34 (Nos. 151-53).

<sup>1</sup> *Lords Journals*, January 16, 1645-1646; *Gangræna*, as cited, p. 150; cp. Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, ed. 1893, iii, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Short Hist.* ch. viii, § 8, pp. 551-52; Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, iv, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Gangræna*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> In 1644 he had been imprisoned at Rury St. Edmunds for "dipping" adults, and after six months' duration had been released on a recantation and promise of amendment. *Gangræna*, as cited, pp. 104-105.

see them to be agreeable to reason and no further." Concerning Jesus there are various heresies, from simple Unitarianism to contemptuous disparagement, with the stipulation for a "Christ formed in us." But though there are cases of unquotable or ribald blasphemy there is little trace of scholarly criticism of the Bible, of reasoning against miracles or the inconsistencies of Scripture, as apart from the doctrine of deity. Nonetheless, it is very credible that "multitudes, unsettled.....have changed their faith, either to Scepticisme, to doubt of everything, or Atheisme, to believe nothing."<sup>1</sup>

Against the furious intolerance of the Puritan legislature some pleaded with new zeal for tolerance all round; arguing that certainty on articles of faith and points of religion was impossible—a doctrine promptly classed as a bad heresy.<sup>2</sup> The plea that toleration would mean concord was met by the confident and not unfounded retort that the "sectaries" would themselves persecute if they could.<sup>3</sup> But this could hardly have been true of all. Notable among the new parties were the Levellers, who insisted that the State should leave religion entirely alone, tolerating all creeds, including even atheism; and who put forward a new and striking ethic, grounding on "universal reason" the right of all men to the soil.<sup>4</sup> In the strictly theological field the most striking innovation, apart from simple Unitarianism, is the denial of the eternity or even the existence of future torments—a position first taken up, as we have seen, either by the continental Socinians or by the unnamed English heretics of the Tudor period, who passed on their heresy to the time of Marlowe.<sup>5</sup> In this connection the learned booklet<sup>6</sup> entitled *Of the Torments of Hell: the foundations and pillars thereof discover'd, search'd, shaken, and removed* (1658) was rightly thought worth translating into French by d'Holbach over a century later.<sup>7</sup> It is an argument on scriptural lines, denying that the conception of a place of eternal torment is either scriptural or credible; and pointing out that many had explained it in a "spiritual" sense.

Humane feeling of this kind counted for much in the ferment; but a contrary hate was no less abundant. The Presbyterian Thomas Edwards, who in a vociferous passion of fear and zeal set

<sup>1</sup> Rev. James Cranford, *Hæreseo-Machia*, a Sermon, 1646, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> No. 100 in *Gangræna*.

<sup>3</sup> See G. P. Gooch's *Hist. of Democ. Ideas in England in the 17th Century*, 1898, ch. vi.

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 4 and 8.

<sup>5</sup> In the British Museum copy the name Richardson is penned, not in a contemporary hand, at the end of the preface; and in the preface to vol. ii of the *Phenix*, 1708, in which the treatise is reprinted, the same name is given, but with uncertainty. The Richardson pointed at was the author of *The Necessity of Toleration in Matters of Religion* (1647). E. B. Underhill, in his collection of that and other *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience* for the Hanserd Knollys Society, 1846, remains doubtful (p. 247) as to the authorship of the tract on hell.

<sup>7</sup> The fourth English edition appeared in 1754.



himself to catalogue the host of heresies that threatened to overwhelm the times, speaks of "monsters" unheard-of theretofore, "now common among us—as denying the Scriptures, pleading for a toleration of all religions and worships, yea, for blasphemy, and denying there is a God."<sup>1</sup> "A Toleration," he declares, "is the grand design of the Devil, his masterpiece and chief engine"; "every day now brings forth books for a Toleration."<sup>2</sup> Among the 180 sects named by him<sup>3</sup> there were "Libertines," "Antiscripturists," "Skeptics and Questionists,"<sup>4</sup> who held nothing save the doctrine of free speech and liberty of conscience;<sup>5</sup> as well as Socinians, Arians, and Anti-trinitarians; and he speaks of serious men who had not only abandoned their religious beliefs, but sought to persuade others to do the same.<sup>6</sup> Under the rule of Cromwell, tolerant as he was of Christian sectarianism, and even of Unitarianism as represented by Biddle, the more advanced heresies would get small liberty; though that of Thomas Muggleton and John Reeve, which took shape about 1651 as the Muggletonian sect, does not seem to have been molested. Muggleton, a mystic, could teach that there was no devil or evil spirit, save in "man's spirit of unclean reason and cursed imagination";<sup>7</sup> but it was only privately that such men as Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner, the regicides, could avow themselves to be of "the natural religion." The statement of Bishop Burnet, following Clarendon, that "many of the republicans began to profess deism," cannot be taken literally, though it is broadly intelligible that "almost all of them were for destroying all clergymen.....and for leaving religion free, as they called it, without either encouragement or restraint."

See Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, bk. i, ed. 1838, p. 43. The phrase, "They were for pulling down the churches," again, cannot be taken literally. Of those who "pretended to little or no religion and acted only upon the principles of civil liberty," Burnet goes on to name Sidney, Henry Nevill, Marten, Wildman, and Harrington. The last was certainly of Hobbes's way of thinking in philosophy (Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 223, note); but Wildman was one of the signers of the Anabaptist petition to Charles II in 1658 (Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion*,

<sup>1</sup> *Gangræna*, ep. ded. (p. 5). Cp. pp. 47, 151, 178-79; and Bailie's *Letters*, ed. 1841, ii, 234-37; iii, 393. The most sweeping plea for toleration seems to have been the book entitled *Toleration Justified*, 1646. (*Gangræna*, p. 151.) The Hanserd Knollys collection, above mentioned, does not contain one of that title.

<sup>2</sup> *Gangræna*, pp. 152-53.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 15. As to other sects mentioned by him cp. Tayler, p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> On the intense aversion of most of the Presbyterians to toleration see Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of Eng.* p. 136. They insisted, rightly enough, that the principle was never recognized in the Bible.

<sup>5</sup> See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 347; 1-vol. ed. p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> Alex. Ross, *Pansebeia*, 4th ed. 1672, p. 379.

<sup>7</sup> Pp. 18-36.

bk. xv, ed. 1843, p. 855). As to Marten and Chaloner, see Carlyle's *Cromwell*, iii, 194; and articles in *Nat. Dict. of Biog. Vaughan* (*Hist. of England*, 1840, ii, 477, note) speaks of Walwyn and Overton as "among the freethinkers of the times of the Commonwealth." They were, however, Biblicists, not unbelievers. Prof. Gardiner (*Hist. of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii, 253, citing a News-letter in the Clarendon MSS.) finds record in 1653 of "a man [who] preached flat atheism in Westminster Hall, uninterrupted by the soldiers of the guard"; but this obviously counts for little.

Between the advance in speculation forced on by the disputes themselves, and the usual revolt against the theological spirit after a long and ferocious display of it, there spread even under the Commonwealth a new temper of secularity. On the one hand, the temperamental distaste for theology, antinomian or other, took form in the private associations for scientific research which were the antecedents of the Royal Society. On the other hand, the spirit of religious doubt spread widely in the middle and upper classes; and between the dislike of the Roundheads for the established clergy and the anger of the Cavaliers against all Puritanism there was fostered that "contempt of the clergy" which had become a clerical scandal at the Restoration and was to remain so for about a century.<sup>1</sup> Their social status was in general low, and their financial position bad; and these circumstances, possible only in a time of weakened religious belief, necessarily tended to further the process of mental change. Within the sphere of orthodoxy, it operated openly. It is noteworthy that the term "rationalist" emerges as the label of a sect of Independents or Presbyterians who declare that "What their reason dictates to them in church or State stands for good, until they be convinced with better."<sup>2</sup> The "rationalism," so-called, of that generation remained ostensibly scriptural; but on other lines thought went further. Of atheism there are at this stage only dubious biographical and controversial traces, such as Mrs. Hutchinson's characterization of a Nottingham physician, possibly a deist, as a "horrible atheist,"<sup>3</sup> and the Rev. John Dove's *Confutation of Atheism* (1640), which does not bear out its title. Ephraim Pagitt, in his *Heresiography* (1644), speaks loosely of an "atheistical sect who affirm that men's soules sleep with them until the day of judgment"; and tells of some alleged atheist merely that he "mocked and jeared at Christ's Incarnation."<sup>4</sup> Similarly a work,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the present writer's *Buckle and his Critics*, 1895, ch. viii, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> See above, vol. i, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, 3rd ed. i, 200.

<sup>4</sup> *Heresiography: The Heretics and Sectaries of these Times*, 1644. Epist. Ded.



entitled *Dispute betwixt an Atheist and a Christian* (1646), shows the existence not of atheists but of deists, and the deist in the dialogue is a Fleming.

More trustworthy is the allusion in Nathaniel Culverwel's *Discourse of the Light of Nature* (written in 1646, published posthumously in 1652) to "those lumps and dunghills of all sects.....that young and upstart generation of gross anti-scripturalists, that have a powder-plot against the Gospel, that would very compendiously behead all Christian religion at one blow, a device which old and ordinary heretics were never acquainted withal."<sup>1</sup> The reference is presumably to the followers of Lawrence Clarkson. Yet even here we have no mention of atheism, which is treated as something almost impossible. Indeed, the very course of arguing in favour of a "Light of Nature" seems to have brought suspicion on Culverwel himself, who shows a noticeable liking for Herbert of Cherbury.<sup>2</sup> He is, however, as may be inferred from his angry tone towards anti-scripturalists, substantially orthodox, and not very important.

It is contended for Culverwel by modern admirers (ed. cited, p. xxi) that he deserves the praise given by Hallam to the later Bishop Cumberland as "the first Christian writer who sought to establish systematically the principle of moral right independent of revelation." [See above, p. 74, the similar tribute of Mosheim to Ames.] But Culverwel does not really make this attempt. His proposition is that reason, "the candle of the Lord," discovers "that all the moral law is founded in natural and common light, in the light of reason, and that there is nothing in the mysteries of the Gospel *contrary* to the light of reason" (Intro. *end*); yet he contends not only that faith transcends reason, but that Abraham's attempt to slay his son was a dutiful obeying of "the God of nature" (pp. 225-26). He does not achieve the simple step of noting that the recognition of revelation as such must be performed by reason, and thus makes no advance on the position of Bacon, much less on those of Pecoek and Hooker. His object, indeed, was not to justify orthodoxy by reason against rationalistic unbelief, but to make a case for reason in theology against the Lutherans and others who, "because Socinus has burnt his wings at this candle of the Lord," scouted all use of it (Intro.). Culverwel, however, was one of the learned group in Emanuel College, Cambridge, whose tradition developed in the next generation into Latitudinarianism; and he may be taken as a learned type of a number of the clergy who were led by the abundant discussion all around them into professing and encouraging a ratiocinative habit of mind.

<sup>1</sup> *Discourse*, ed. 1857, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. J. Brown's pref. to ed. of 1857, p. xxii.

Thus we find Dean Stuart, Clerk of the Closet to Charles I, devoting one of his short homilies to Jerome's text, *Tentemus animas quae deficiunt a fide naturalibus rationibus adjurare*. "It is not enough," he writes, "for you to rest in an imaginary faith, and easiness in beleeving, except yee know also what and why and how you come to that beleef. Implicite beleevers, ignorant beleevers, the adversary may swallow, but the understanding beleever hee must chaw, and pick bones before hee come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. The implicite beleever stands in an open field, and the enemy will ride over him easily: the understanding beleever is in a fenced town." (*Catholique Divinity*, 1657, pp. 133-34—a work written many years earlier.)

The discourse on Atheism, again, in the posthumous works of John Smith of Cambridge (d. 1652), is entirely retrospective; but soon another note is sounded. As early as 1652, the year after the issue of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the prolific Walter Charleton, who had been physician to the king, published a book entitled *The Darkness of Atheism Expelled by the Light of Nature*, wherein he asserted that England "hath of late produced and doth.....foster more swarms of atheistical monsters.....than any age, than any Nation hath been infested withal." In the following year Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, published his *Antidote against Atheism*. The flamboyant dedication to Viscountess Conway affirms that the existence of God is "as clearly demonstrable as any theorem in mathematicks"; but, the reverend author adds, "considering the state of things as they are, I cannot but pronounce that there is more necessity of this my Antidote than I could wish there were." At the close of the preface he pleasantly explains that he will use no Biblical arguments, but talk to the atheist as a "mere Naturalist"; inasmuch as "he that converses with a barbarian must discourse to him in his own language," and "he that would gain upon the more weak and sunk minds of sensual mortals is to accommodate himself to their capacity, who, like the bat and owl, can see nowhere so well as in the shady glimmerings of their twilight." Then, after some elementary play with the design argument, the entire Third Book of forty-six folio pages is devoted to a parade of old wives' tales of witches and witchcraft, witches' sabbaths, apparitions, commotions by devils, ghosts, incubi, polter-geists—the whole vulgar medley of the peasant superstitions of Europe.

It is not that the Platonist does violence to his own philosophic tastes by way of influencing the "bats and owls" of atheism. This mass of superstition is his own special pabulum. In the preface



he has announced that, while he may abstain from the use of the Scriptures, nothing shall restrain him from telling what he knows of spirits. "I am so cautious and circumspect," he claims, "that I make use of no narrations that either the avarice of the priest or the credulity and fancifulness of the melancholist may render suspected." As for the unbelievers, "their confident ignorance shall never dash me out of confidence with my well-grounded knowledge; for I have been no careless inquirer into these things." It is after a polter-geist tale of the crassest description that he announces that it was strictly investigated and attested by "that excellently-learned and noble gentleman, Mr. R. Boyle," who avowed "that all his settled indisposedness to believe strange things was overcome by this special conviction."<sup>1</sup> And the section ends with the proposition: "Assuredly that saying is not more true in politick, *No Bishop, no King*, than this in metaphysicks, *No Spirit, no God*." Such was the mentality of some of the most eminent and scholarly Christian apologists of the time. It seems safe to conclude that the Platonist made few converts.

More avowed that he wrote without having read previous apologists; and others were similarly spontaneous in the defence of the faith. In 1654 there is noted<sup>2</sup> a treatise called *Atheismus Vapulans*, by William Towers, whose message can in part be inferred from his title;<sup>3</sup> and in 1657 Charleton issued his *Immortality of the Human Soul demonstrated by the Light of Nature*, wherein the argument, which says nothing of revelation, is so singularly unconfident, and so much broken in upon by excursus, as to leave it doubtful whether the author was more lacking in dialectic skill or in conviction. And still the traces of unbelief multiply. Baxter and Howe were agreed, in 1658, that there were both "infidels and papists" at work around them; and in 1659 Howe writes: "I know some leading men are not Christians."<sup>4</sup> "Seekers, Vanists, and Behmenists" are specified as groups to which both infidels and papists attach themselves. And Howe, recognizing how religious strifes promote unbelief, bears witness "What a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the faith of Christians in this age become!.....Most content themselves to profess it only as the religion of their country."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> More, *Collection of Philosophical Writings*, 4th ed. 1692, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Fabricius, *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum*, 1725, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> No copy in British Museum.

<sup>4</sup> Urwick, *Life of John Howe*, with 1846 ed. of Howe's *Select Works*, pp. xiii, xix. Urwick, a learned evangelical, fully admits the presence of "infidels" on both sides in the politics of the time.

<sup>5</sup> *Discourse Concerning Union Among Protestants*, ed. cited, pp. 146, 156, 158. In the preface to his treatise, *The Redeemer's Tears Wept over Lost Souls*, Howe complains of

Alongside of all this vindication of Christianity there was going on constant and cruel persecution of heretic Christians. The Unitarian John Biddle, master of the Gloucester Grammar School, was dismissed for his denial of the Trinity; and in 1647 he was imprisoned, and his book burned by the hangman. In 1654 he was again imprisoned; and in 1655 he was banished to the Scilly Islands. Returning to London after the Restoration, he was again arrested, and died in gaol in 1662.<sup>1</sup> Under the Commonwealth (1656) James Naylor, the Quaker, narrowly escaped death for blasphemy, but was whipped through the streets, pilloried, bored through the tongue with a hot iron, branded in the forehead, and sent to hard labour in prison. Many hundreds of Quakers were imprisoned and more or less cruelly handled.

From the *Origines Sacrae* (1662) of Stillingfleet, nevertheless, it would appear that both deism and atheism were becoming more and more common.<sup>2</sup> He states that "the most popular pretences of the atheists of our age have been the irreconcilableness of the account of times in Scripture with that of the learned and ancient heathen nations, the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason; and the account which may be given of the origin of things from the principles of philosophy without the Scriptures." These positions are at least as natural to deists as to atheists; and Stillingfleet is later found protesting against the policy of some professed Christians who give up the argument from miracles as valueless.<sup>3</sup> His whole treatise, in short, assumes the need for meeting a very widespread unbelief in the Bible, though it rarely deals with the atheism of which it so constantly speaks. After the Restoration, naturally, all the new tendencies were greatly reinforced,<sup>4</sup> alike by the attitude of the king and his companions, all influenced by French culture, and by the general reaction against Puritanism. Whatever ways of thought had been characteristic of the Puritans were now in more or less complete disfavour; the belief in witchcraft was scouted as much on this ground as on any other;<sup>5</sup> and the

"the atheism of some, the avowed mere theism of others," and of a fashionable habit of ridiculing religion. This sermon, however, appears to have been first published in 1684; and the date of its application is uncertain.

<sup>1</sup> Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, Art. 285.

<sup>2</sup> The preface begins: "It is neither to satisfy the importunity of friends, nor to prevent false copies (which and such like excuses I know are expected in usual prefaces), that I have adventured abroad this following treatise: but it is out of a just resentment of the affronts and indignities which have been cast on religion, by such who account it a matter of judgment to disbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to dispute themselves out of the possibility of being happy in another world."

<sup>3</sup> See bk. ii, ch. x. Page 338, 3rd ed. 1666.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Glanvill, pref. *Address to his Sceptis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. 1885, pp. lv-lvii; and Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, Dial. i, ch. xxxii.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 109.



deistic doctrines found a ready audience among royalists, whose enemies had been above all things Bibliolaters.

There is evidence that Charles II, at least up to the time of his becoming a Catholic, and probably even to the end, was at heart a deist. See Burnet's *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, pp. 61, 175, and notes; and cp. refs. in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 362, note; 1-vol. ed. p. 205. St. Evremond, who knew him and many of his associates, affirmed expressly that Charles's creed "étoit seulement ce qui passe vulgairement, quoiqu' injustement, pour une extinction totale de Religion: je veux dire le Déisme" (*Œuvres mêlées*: t. viii of *Œuvres*, ed. 1714, p. 354). His opinion, St. Evremond admits, was the result of simple recognition of the actualities of religious life, not of reading, or of much reflection. And his adoption of Catholicism, in St. Evremond's opinion, was purely political. He saw that Catholicism made much more than Protestantism for kingly power, and that his Catholic subjects were the most subservient.

We gather this, however, still from the apologetic treatises and the historians, not from new deistic literature; for in virtue of the Press Licensing Act, passed on behalf of the Church in 1662, no heretical book could be printed; so that Herbert was thus far the only professed deistic writer in the field, and Hobbes the only other of similar influence. Baxter, writing in 1655 on *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, handles chiefly Anabaptists; and in his *Reformed Pastor* (1656), though he avows that "the common ignorant people," seeing the endless strifes of the clergy, "are hardened by us against all religion," the only specific unbelief he mentions is that of "the devil's own agents, the unhappy Socinians," who had written "so many treatises for.....unity and peace."<sup>1</sup> But in his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, issued in 1667, he thinks fit to prove the existence of God and a future state, and the truth and the supernatural character of the Christian religion. Any deist or atheist who took the trouble to read through it would have been rewarded by the discovery that the learned author has annihilated his own case. In his first part he affirms: "If there were no life of Retribution after this, Obedience to God would be finally men's loss and ruine: But Obedience to God shall not be finally men's loss and ruine: Ergo, there is another life."<sup>2</sup> In the second part he writes that "Man's personal interest is an unfit rule and measure of God's goodness";<sup>3</sup> and, going on to meet the new argument

<sup>1</sup> *The Reformed Pastor*, abr. ed. 1826, pp. 236, 239.

<sup>2</sup> Work cited, ed. 1667, p. 136. The proposition is reiterated.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 388.

against Christianity based on the inference that an infinity of stars are inhabited, he writes:—

Ask any man who knoweth these things whether all this earth be any more in comparison of the whole creation than one Prison is to a Kingdom or Empire, or the paring of one nail.....in comparison of the whole body. And if God should cast off *all this earth*, and use *all the sinners* in it as they deserve, it is no more sign of a want of benignity or mercy in him than it is for a King to cast *one subject* of a *million* into a jail.....or than it is to *pare a man's nails*, or cut off a wart, or a hair, or to pull out a rotten aking tooth.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the second part absolutely destroys one of the fundamental positions of the first. No semblance of levity on the part of the freethinkers could compare with the profound intellectual insincerity of such a propaganda as this; and that deism and atheism continued to gain ground is proved by the multitude of apologetic treatises. Even in church-ridden Scotland they were found necessary; at least the young advocate George Mackenzie, afterwards to be famous as the "bluidy Mackenzie" of the time of persecution, thought it expedient to make his first appearance in literature with a *Religio Stoici* (1663), wherein he sets out with a refutation of atheism. It is difficult to believe that his counsel to Christians to watch the "horror-creating beds of dying atheists"<sup>2</sup>—a false pretence as it stands—represented any knowledge whatever of professed atheism in his own country; and his discussion of the subject is wholly on the conventional lines—notably so when he uses the customary plea, later associated with Pascal, that the theist runs no risk even if there is no future life, whereas the atheist runs a tremendous risk if there is one;<sup>3</sup> but when he writes of "that mystery why the greatest wits are most frequently the greatest atheists,"<sup>4</sup> he must be presumed to refer at least to deists. And other passages show that he had listened to freethinking arguments. Thus he speaks<sup>5</sup> of those who "detract from Scripture by attributing the production of miracles to natural causes"; and again<sup>6</sup> of those who "contend that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low style; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions." His own answers are conspicuously weak. In the latter passage he continues: "But those miscreants should consider that much of the Scripture's native splendour is impaired by its translators"; and as to miracles

<sup>1</sup> *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, pp. 388–89.

<sup>2</sup> *Religio Stoici*, Edinburgh, 1663, p. 19. The essay was reprinted in 1665, and in London in 1693 under the title of *The Religious Stoic*.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 69.



he makes the inept answer that if secondary causes were in operation they acted by God's will; going on later to suggest on his own part that prophecy may be not a miraculous gift, but "a natural (though the highest) perfection of our human nature."<sup>1</sup> Apart from his weak dialectic, he writes in general with cleverness and literary finish, but without any note of sincerity; and his profession of concern that reason should be respected in theology<sup>2</sup> is as little acted on in his later life as his protest against persecution.<sup>3</sup> The inference from the whole essay is that in Scotland, as in England, the civil war had brought up a considerable crop of reasoned unbelief; and that Mackenzie, professed defender of the faith as he was at twenty-five, and official persecutor of nonconformists as he afterwards became, met with a good deal of it in his cultured circle. In his later booklet, *Reason: an Essay* (1690), he speaks of the "ridiculous and impudent extravagance of some who.....take pains to persuade themselves and others that there is not a God."<sup>4</sup> He further coarsely asperses all atheists as debauchees,<sup>5</sup> though he avows that "Infidelity is not the cause of false reasoning, because such as are not atheists reason falsely."

When anti-theistic thought could subsist in the ecclesiastical climate of Puritan Scotland, it must have flourished somewhat in England. In 1667 appeared *A Philosophicall Essay towards an eviction of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc., of which the preface proclaims "the bold and horrid pride of Atheists and Epicures" who "have laboured to introduce into the world a general Atheism, or at least a doubtful Scepticisme in matters of Religion." In 1668 was published Meric Casaubon's treatise, *Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural, Civil, and Divine*, assailing not only "the Sadducism of these times in denying spirits, witches," etc., but "Epicurus.....and the juggling and false dealing lately used to bring Atheism into Credit"—a thrust at Gassendi. A similar polemic is entombed in a ponderous folio "romance" entitled *Bentivolio and Urania*, by Nathaniel Ingelo, D.D., a fellow first of Emanuel College, and afterwards of Queen's College, Cambridge (1660; 4th ed. amended, 1682). The second part, edifyingly dedicated to the Earl of Lauderdale, one of the worst men of his day, undertakes

<sup>1</sup> *Religio Stoici*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> This last is interesting as a probable echo of opinions he had heard from some of his older contemporaries: "Opinion kept within its proper bounds is an [=the Scottish] pure act of the mind; and so it would appear that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the soul is as unjust as to punish one relation for another" (pref. pp. 10-11). He adds that "the Almighty hath left no warrant upon holy record for persecuting such as dissent from us."

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 82. It is noteworthy that Mackenzie puts in a protest against "implicit Faith and Infallibility, those great tyrants over Reason" (p. 88). But the essay as a whole is ill-planned and unimpressive.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 122.

to handle the "Atheists, Epicureans, and Skepticks"; and in the preface the atheists are duly vituperated; while Epicurus is described as a gross sensualist, in terms of the legend, and the skeptics as "resigned to the slavery of vice." In the sixth book the atheists are allowed a momentary hearing in defence of their "horrid absurdities," from which it appears that there were current arguments alike anthropological and metaphysical against theism. The most competent part of the author's own argument, which is unlimited as to space, is that which controverts the thesis of the invention of religious beliefs by "politicians"<sup>1</sup>—a notion first put in currency, as we have seen, by those who insisted on the expediency and value of such inventions; as, Polybius among the ancients, and Machiavelli among the moderns; and further by Christian priests, who described all non-Christian religions as human inventions.

Dr. Ingelo's folio seems to have had many readers; but he avowedly did not look for converts; and defences of the faith on a less formidable scale were multiplied. A "Person of Honour" (Sir Charles Wolseley) produced in 1669 an essay on *The Unreasonableness of Atheism made Manifest*, which, without supplying any valid arguments, gives some explanation of the growth of unbelief in terms of the political and other antecedents;<sup>2</sup> and in 1670 appeared Richard Barthogge's *Divine Goodness Explicated and Vindicated from the Exceptions of the Atheists*. Baxter in 1671<sup>3</sup> complains that "infidels are grown so numerous and so audacious, and look so big and talk so loud"; and still the process continues. In 1672 Sir William Temple writes indignantly of "those who would pass for wits in our age by saying things which, David tells us, the fool said in his heart."<sup>4</sup> In the same year appeared *The Reasonableness of Scripture-Belief*, by Sir Charles Wolseley, and *The Atheist Silenced*, by one J. M.; in 1674, Dr. Thomas Good's *Firmianus et Dubitantius, or Dialogues concerning Atheism, Infidelity, and Popery*; in 1675, the posthumous treatise of Bishop Wilkins (d. 1672), *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, with a preface by Tillotson; and a *Brevis Demonstratio*, with the modest sub-title, "The Truth of Christian Religion Demonstrated by Reasons the best that have yet been out in English"; in 1677, Bishop Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist*; and in 1678 the massive work of Cudworth on *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, 2nd ed. pt. ii, pp. 106-15.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 86-87, 89-90. This explanation is also given by Bishop Wilkins in his treatise on *Natural Religion*, 7th ed. p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> Replying to Herbert's *De Veritate*, which he seems not to have read before.

<sup>4</sup> Pref. to *Obs. upon the United Prov. of the Netherlands*, in *Works*, ed. 1814, i, 36.



attacking atheism (not deism) on philosophic lines which sadly compromised the learned author.<sup>1</sup> English dialectic being found insufficient, there was even produced in 1679 a translation by the Rev. Joshua Bonhome of the French *L'Athéisme Convaincu* of David Dersdon, published twenty years before.

All of these works explicitly avow the abundance of unbelief; Tillotson, himself accused of it, pronounces the age "miserably overrun with Skepticism and Infidelity"; and Wilkins, avowing that these tendencies are common "not only among sensual men of the vulgar sort, but even among those who pretend to a more than ordinary measure of wit and learning," attempts to meet them by a purely deistic argument, with a claim for Christianity appended, as if he were concerned chiefly to rebut atheism, and held his own Christianity on a very rationalistic tenure. The fact was that the orthodox clergy were as hard put to it to repel religious antinomianism on the one hand as to repel atheism on the other; and no small part of the deistic movement seems to have been set up by the reaction against pious lawlessness.<sup>2</sup> Thus we have Tillotson, writing as Dean of Canterbury, driven to plead in his preface to the work of Wilkins that "it is a great mistake" to think the obligation of moral duties "doth solely depend upon the revelation of God's will made to us in the Holy Scriptures." It was such reasoning that brought upon him the charge of freethinking.

If it be now possible to form any accurate picture of the state of belief in the latter part of the seventeenth century, it may perhaps be done by recognizing three categories of temperament or mental proclivity. First we have to reckon with the great mass of people held to religious observance by hebetude,<sup>3</sup> devoid of the deeper mystical impulse or psychic bias which exhibited itself on the one hand among the dissenters who partly preserved the "enthusiasms" of the Commonwealth period, and on the other among the more cultured pietists of the Church who, banning "enthusiasm" in its stronger forms, cultivated a certain "enthusiasm" of their own. Religionists of the latter type were ministered to by superstitious mystics like Henry More, who, even when undertaking to "prove" the existence of God and the separate existence of the soul by argument and by demonology, taught them to cultivate a "warranted enthusiasm," and to "endeavour after a certain principle more noble

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 87, 94-98, 111, 112.

<sup>2</sup> As to the religious immoralism see Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. ii, § 23, and Murdock's notes.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the picture of average Protestant deportment given by Benjamin Bennet in his *Discourses against Popery*, 1714, p. 377.

and inward than reason itself, and without which reason will falter, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things"....."something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retrue a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should adventure to term it divine sagacity, which is the first rise of successful reason, especially in matters of great comprehension and moment."<sup>1</sup> There was small psychic difference between this dubiously draped affirmation of the "inner light" and the more orotund proclamations of it by the dissenters who, for a considerable section of the people, still carried on the tradition of rapturous pietism; and the dissenters were not always at a disadvantage in that faculty for rhetoric which has generally been a main factor in doctrinal religion.<sup>2</sup>

From the popular and the eclectic pietist alike the generality of the Anglican clergy stood aloof; and among them, in turn, a rationalistic and anti-mythical habit of mind in a manner joined men who were divided in their beliefs. The clergymen who wrote lawyer-like treatises against schism were akin in psychosis to those who, in their distaste for the parade of inspiration, veered towards deism. Tillotson was not the only man reputed to have done so: fervid dissenters declared that many of the established clergy paid "more respect to the light of reason than to the light of the Scriptures," and further "left Christ out of their religion, disowned imputed righteousness, derided the operations of the holy spirit as the empty pretences of enthusiasts."<sup>3</sup> Of men of this temperament, some would open dialectic batteries against dissent; while others, of a more searching proclivity, would tend to construct for themselves a rationalistic creed out of the current medley of theological and philosophic doctrine. The great mass of course maintained an allegiance of habit to the main formulas of the faith, putting quasi-rational aspects on the trinity, providence, redemption, and the future life, very much as the adherents of political parties normally vindicate their supposed principles; and there was a good deal of surviving temperamental piety even in the Restoration period.<sup>4</sup> But the outstanding feature of the age, as contrasted with

<sup>1</sup> More, *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, 4th ed. 1712, gen. pref. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Compare some of the extracts in Thomas Bennet's *Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., 2nd ed. 1704, from the sermons of R. Gouge (1688). The description of men as "mortal crumbling bits of dependency, yesterday's start-ups, that come out of the abyss of nothing, hastening to the bosom of their mother earth" (work cited, p. 93) is a reminder that the resonant and cadenced rhetoric of the Brownes and Taylors and Cudworths was an art of the age, at the command of different orders of propaganda.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by Bennet, *A Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., as cited, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Henry More's biographer, the Rev. Richard Ward, says "the late Mr. Chiswel told a friend of mine that for twenty years together after the return of King Charles the Second the *Mystery of Godliness*, and Dr. More's other works, ruled all the booksellers in London" (*Life of More*, 1710, pp. 162-63). We have seen the nature of some of More's "other works."



previous periods, was the increasing commonness of the skeptical or rationalistic attitude in general society. Sir Charles Wolseley protests<sup>1</sup> that "Irreligion, 'tis true, in its practice hath still been the companion of every age, but its open and public defence seems the peculiar of this"; adding that "most of the bad principles of this age are of no earlier a date than one very ill book, and indeed but the spawn of the *Leviathan*." This, as we have seen, is a delusion; but the influence of Hobbes was a potent factor.

All the while, the censorship of the press, which was one of the means by which the clerical party under Charles combated heresy, prevented any new and outspoken writing on the deistic side. The *Treatise of Humane [i.e. Human] Reason* (1674)<sup>2</sup> of Martin Clifford, a scholarly man-about-town,<sup>3</sup> who was made Master of the Charterhouse, went indeed to the bottom of the question of authority by showing, as Spinoza had done shortly before,<sup>4</sup> that the acceptance of authority is itself in the last resort grounded in reason. The author makes no overt attack on religion, and professes Christian belief, but points out that many modern wars had been on subjects of religion, and elaborates a skilful argument on the gain to be derived from toleration. Reason alone, fairly used, will bring a man to the Christian faith: he who denies this cannot be a Christian. As for schism, it is created not by variation in belief, but by the refusal to tolerate it. This ingenious and well-written treatise speedily elicited three replies, all pronouncing it a pernicious work. Dr. Laney, Bishop of Ely, is reported to have declared that book and author might fitly be burned together;<sup>5</sup> and Dr. Isaac Watts, while praising it for "many useful notions," found it "exalt reason as the rule of religion as well as the guide, to a degree very dangerous."<sup>6</sup> Its actual effect seems to have been to restrain the persecution of dissenters.<sup>7</sup> In 1680, three years after Clifford's death, there appeared *An Apology for a Treatise of Humane Reason*, by Albertus Warren, wherein one of the attacks, entitled *Plain Dealing*, by a Cambridge scholar, is specially answered.<sup>8</sup> This helped to evoke

<sup>1</sup> *The Reasonableness of Scripture Belief*, 1672, Epist. Ded.

<sup>2</sup> Rep. 1675; 2nd ed. 1691; rep. in the *Phoenix*, vol. ii, 1708; 3rd ed. 1736.

<sup>3</sup> A very hostile account of him is given in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* He was, however, the friend of Cowley, and the "M. Clifford" to whom Sprat addressed his sketch of Cowley's *Life*. He was also a foe of Dryden—the "malicious Matt Clifford" of Dryden's *Sessions of the Poets*; and he attacked the poet in *Notes on Dryden's Poems* (published 1687), and is supposed to have had a hand in the *Rehearsal*. He was befriended by Shaftesbury.

<sup>4</sup> *Tract. Theol. Polit.* c. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ii, 381–82; Granger, *Biog. Hist. of England*, 5th ed. v, 293.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*, 1785, App. I.

<sup>7</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, citing Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*.

<sup>8</sup> It has been suggested that this was really written by Clifford, for posthumous publication. The humorous sketch of "His Character" at the close, suggesting that his vices seem to the writer to have outweighed his virtues, hints of ironical mystification.

the anonymous *Discourse of Things above Reason* (1681), by Robert Boyle, the distinguished author of *The Sceptical Chemist*, whom we have seen backing up Henry More in acceptance of the grossest of ignorant superstitions. The most notable thing about the *Discourse* is that it anticipates Berkeley's argument against freethinking mathematicians.<sup>1</sup>

The stress of new discussion is further to be gathered from the work of Howe, *On the Reconcilableness of God's Prescience of the Sins of Men with the Wisdom and Sincerity of his Counsels and Exhortations*, produced in 1677 at Boyle's request. As a modern admirer admits that the thesis was a hopeless one,<sup>2</sup> it is not to be supposed that it did much to lessen doubt in its own day. The preface to Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1677), which for the first time brings that appellation into prominence in English controversy, tacitly abandoning the usual ascription of atheism to all unbelievers, avows that "a mean esteem of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion" has become very common "among the Skepticks of this Age," and complains very much, as Butler did sixty years later, of the spirit of "Raillery and Buffoonery" in which the matter was too commonly approached. The "Letter" shows that a multitude of the inconsistencies and other blemishes of the Old Testament were being keenly discussed; and it cannot be said that the Bishop's vindication was well calculated to check the tendency. Indeed, we have the angry and reiterated declaration of Archdeacon Parker, writing in 1681, that "the ignorant and the unlearned among ourselves are become the greatest pretenders to skepticism; and it is the common people that nowadays set up for Skepticism and Infidelity"; that "Atheism and Irreligion are at length become as common as Vice and Debauchery"; and that "Plebeians and Mechanicks have philosophized themselves into Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and Highways. And they are able to demonstrate out of the *Leviathan* that there is no God nor Providence," and so on.<sup>3</sup> As the Archdeacon's method of refutation consists mainly in abuse, he doubtless had the usual measure of success. A similar order of dialectic is employed by Dr. Sherlock in his *Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies* (1681). The opening section is addressed to the "speculative atheists," here described as receding from the principles of

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, pp. 10, 14, 30, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Urwick, *Life of Howe*, as cited, p. xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature and of the Christian Religion*, by Samuel Parker, D.D., 1681, pref. The first part of this treatise is avowedly a popularization of the argument of Cumberland's *Disquisitio de Legibus Naturæ*, 1672. Parker had previously published in Latin a *Disputatio de Deo et Providentiâ Divinâ*, in which he raised the question, *An Philosophorum ulli, et quinam Athei fuerunt* (1678).



their "great Master, Mr. Hobbs," who, "though he had no great opinion of religion in itself, yet thought it something considerable when it became the law of the nation." Such atheists, the reverend writer notes, when it is urged on them that all mankind worship "some God or other," reply that such an argument is as good for polytheism and idolatry as for monotheism; so, after formally inviting them to "cure their souls of that fatal and mortal disease, which makes them beasts here and devils hereafter," and lamenting that he is not dealing with "reasonable men," he bethinks him that "the laws of conversation require us to treat all men with just respects," and admits that there have been "some few wise and cautious atheists." To such, accordingly, he suggests that the atheist has already a great advantage in a world morally restrained by religion, where he is under no such restraint, and that, "if he should by his wit and learning proselyte a whole nation to atheism, Hell would break loose on Earth, and he might soon find himself exposed to all those violences and injuries which he now securely practises." For the rest, they had better not affront God, who may after all exist, and be able to revenge himself.<sup>1</sup> And so forth.

Of deists as such, Sherlock has nothing to say beyond treating as "practical atheists" men who admit the existence of God, yet never go to church, though "religious worship is nothing else but a public acknowledgment of God." Their non-attendance "is as great, if not a greater affront to God, and contempt of him, than atheism itself."<sup>2</sup> But the reverend writer's strongest resentment is aroused by the spectacle of freethinkers asking for liberty of thought.

"It is a fulsome and nauseous thing," he breathlessly protests, "to see the atheists and infidels of our days to turn great reformers of religion, to set up a mighty cry for liberty of conscience. For whatever reformation of religion may be needful at this time, whatever liberty of conscience may be fit to be granted, yet what have these men to do to meddle with it; those who think religion a mere fable, and God to be an Utopian prince, and conscience a man of clouts set up for a scarecrow to fright such silly creatures from their beloved enjoyments, and hell and heaven to be forged in the same mint with the poet's Styx and Acheron and Elysian Fields? We are like to see blessed times, if such men had but the reforming of religion."<sup>3</sup>

Dr Sherlock was not going to do good if the devil bade him.

The faith had a wittier champion in South; but he, in a Westminster Abbey sermon of 1684-5,<sup>4</sup> mournfully declares that

"The weakness of our church discipline since its restoration,

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, 2nd ed. 1682, pp. 32, 38-40, 45-48.  
<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> *Twelve Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*, 1692, pp. 438-39.

whereby it has been scarce able to get any hold on men's consciences, and much less able to keep it; and the great prevalence of that atheistical doctrine of the *Leviathan*; and the unhappy propagation of Erastianism; these things (I say) with some others have been the sad and fatal causes that have loosed the bands of conscience and eaten out the very heart and sense of Christianity among us, to that degree, that there is now scarce any religious tie or restraint upon persons, but merely from those faint remainders of natural conscience, which God will be sure to keep alive upon the hearts of men, as long as they are men, for the great ends of his own providence, whether they will or no. So that, were it not for this sole obstacle, religion is not now so much in danger of being divided and torn piecemeal by sects and factions, as of being at once devoured by atheism. Which being so, let none wonder that irreligion is accounted policy when it is grown even to a fashion; and passes for wit, with some, as well as for wisdom with others."

How general was the ferment of discussion may be gathered from Dryden's *Religio Laici* (1682), addressed to the youthful Henry Dickinson, translator of Père Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* (Fr. 1678). The French scholar was suspect to begin with; and Bishop Burnet tells that Richard Hampden (grandson of the patriot), who was connected with the Rye House Plot and committed suicide in the reign of William and Mary, had been "much corrupted" in his religious principles by Simon's conversation at Paris. In the poem, Dryden recognizes the upsetting tendency of the treatise, albeit he terms it "matchless":—

For some, who have his secret meaning guessed,  
Have found our author not too much a priest;

and his flowing disquisition, which starts from poetic contempt of reason and ends in prosaic advice to keep quiet about its findings, leaves the matter at that. The hopelessly confused but musical passage:

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars,  
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,  
Is Reason to the soul,

begins the poem; but the poet thinks it necessary both in his preface and in his piece to argue with the deists in a fashion which must have entertained them as much as it embarrassed the more thoughtful orthodox, his simple thesis being that all ideas of deity were *débris* from the primeval revelation to Noah, and that natural reason could never have attained to a God-idea at all. And even at that, as regards the Herbertian argument:

No supernatural worship can be true,  
Because a general law is that alone  
Which must to all and everywhere be known:



he confesses that

Of all objections this indeed is chief  
To startle reason, stagger frail belief;

and feebly proceeds to argue away the worst meaning of the creed of "the good old man" Athanasius. Finally, we have a fatherly appeal for peace and quietness among the sects:—

And after hearing what our Church can say,  
If still our reason runs another way,  
That private reason 'tis more just to curb  
Than by disputes the public peace disturb;  
For points obscure are of small use to learn,  
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

It must have been the general disbelief in Dryden's sincerity on religious matters that caused the ascription to him of various free-thinking treatises, for there is no decisive evidence that he was ever pronouncedly heterodox. His attitude to rationalism in the *Religio Laici* is indeed that of one who either could not see the scope of the problem or was determined not to indicate his recognition of it; and on the latter view the insincerity of both poem and preface would be exorbitant. By his nominal hostility to deism, however, Dryden did freethought a service of some importance. After his antagonism had been proclaimed, no one could plausibly associate freethinking with licentiousness, in which Dryden so far exceeded nearly every poet and dramatist of his age that the non-juror Jeremy Collier was free to single him out as the representative of theatrical lubricity. But in simple justice it must also be avowed that of all the opponents of deism in that day he is one of the least embittered, and that his amiable superficiality of argument must have tended to stimulate the claims of reason.

The late Dr. Verrall, a keen but unprejudiced critic, sums up as regards Dryden's religious poetry in general that "What is clear is that he had a marked dislike of clergy of all sorts, as such"; that "the main points of Deism are noted in *Religio Laici* (46-61); and that "his creed was presumably some sort of Deism" (*Lectures on Dryden*, 1914, pp. 148-50). Further, "*The State of Innocence* is really deistic and not Christian in tone: in his play of *Tyrannic Love*, the religion of St. Catharine may be mere philosophy"; and though the poet in his preface to that play protests that his "outward conversation shall never be justly taxed with the note of atheism or profaneness," the disclaimer "proves nothing as to his positive belief: Deism is not profane." In *Absalom and Achitophel*, again, the "coarse satire on Transubstantiation (118 ff.) shows rather religious insensibility than hostile theology," though "the poem shows his

dislike of liberty and private judgment (49-50)." Of the *Religio Laici* the critic asks: "Now in all this, is there any religion at all?" The poem "might well be dismissed as mere politics but for its astounding commencement" (p. 155). The critic unexpectedly fails to note that the admired commencement is an insoluble confusion of metaphors.

How far the process of reasoning had gone among quiet thinking people before the Revolution may be gathered from the essay entitled *Miracles no Violations of the Laws of Nature*, published in 1683.<sup>1</sup> Its thesis is that put explicitly by Montaigne and implicitly by Bacon, that Ignorance is the only worker of miracles; in other words, "that the power of God and the power of Nature are one and the same"—a simple and straightforward way of putting a conception which Cudworth had put circuitously and less courageously a few years before. No Scriptural miracle is challenged *qua* event. "Among the many miracles related to be done in favour of the Israelites," says the writer, "there is (I think) no one that can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to th' establisht Order of Nature";<sup>2</sup> and he calmly accepts the Biblical account of the first rainbow, explaining it as passing for a miracle merely because it was the first. He takes his motto from Pliny: "Quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit?"<sup>3</sup> This is, however, a preliminary strategy; as is the opening reminder that "most of the ancient Fathers.....and of the most learned Theologues among the moderns" hold that the Scriptures as regards natural things do not design to instruct men in physics but "aim only to excite pious affections in their breasts."

We accordingly reach the position that the Scripture "many times speaks of natural things, yea even of God himself, very improperly, as aiming to affect and occupy the imagination of men, not to convince their reason." Many Scriptural narratives, therefore, "are either delivered poetically or related according to the preconceived opinions and prejudices of the writer." "Wherefore we here absolutely conclude that all the events that are *truly* related in the Scripture to have come to pass, proceeded necessarily .....according to the immutable Laws of Nature; and that if anything be found which can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to those laws.....we may safely and piously believe the same not to have been dictated by divine inspiration, but impiously added to the sacred volume by sacrilegious men; for whatever is

<sup>1</sup> This has been ascribed, without any good ground, to Charles Blount. It does not seem to me to be in his style.

<sup>2</sup> Premonition to the Candid Reader.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Nat.* vii, 1.



against Nature is against Reason; and whatever is against Reason is absurd, and therefore also to be rejected and refuted."<sup>1</sup>

Lest this should be found too hard a doctrine there is added, apropos of Joshua's staying of the sun and moon, a literary solution which has often done duty in later times. "To interpret Scripture-miracles, and to understand from the narrations of them how they really happened, 'tis necessary to know the opinions of those who first reported them.....otherwise we shall confound.....things which have really happen'd with things purely imaginary, and which were only prophetic representations. For in Scripture many things are related as real, and which were also believ'd to be real even by the relators themselves, that notwithstanding were only representations form'd in the brain, and merely imaginary—as that God, the Supreme Being, descended from heaven.....upon Mount Sinai.....; that Elias ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot.....which were only representations accommodated to their opinions who deliver'd them down to us."<sup>2</sup> Such argumentation had to prepare the way for Hume's *Essay Of Miracles*, half a century later; and concerning both reasoners it is to be remembered that their thought was to be "infidelity" for centuries after them. It needed real freethinking, then, to produce such doctrine in the days of the Rye House Plot.

Meanwhile, during an accidental lapse of the press laws, the deist CHARLES BLOUNT<sup>3</sup> (1654-1693) had produced with his father's help his *Anima Mundi* (1679), in which there is set forth a measure of cautious unbelief; following it up (1680) by his much more pronounced essay, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, a keen attack on the principle of revelation and clericalism in general, and his translation [from the Latin version] of Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, so annotated<sup>4</sup> as to be an ingenious counterblast to the Christian claims, and so prefaced as to be an open challenge to orthodoxy. The book was condemned to be burnt; and only the influence of Blount's family,<sup>5</sup> probably, prevented his

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet cited, pp. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning whom see Macaulay's *History*, ch. xix, ed. 1877, ii, 411-12—a very prejudiced account. Blount is there spoken of as "one of the most unscrupulous plagiarists that ever lived," and as having "stolen" from Milton, because he issued a pamphlet "By Philopatrie," largely made up from the *Areopagitica*. Compare Macaulay's treatment of Locke, who adopted Dudley North's currency scheme (ch. xxi, vol. ii, p. 547).

<sup>3</sup> Bayle (art. APOLLONIUS, note), who is followed by the French translator of Philostratus with Blount's notes in 1779 (J. F. Salvemini de Castillon), says the notes were drawn from the papers of Lord Herbert of Cherbury; but of this Blount says nothing.

<sup>4</sup> As to these see the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* The statements of Anthony Wood as to the writings of Blount's father, relied on in the author's *Dynamics of Religion*, appear to be erroneous. Sir Thomas Pope Blount, Charles's eldest brother, shows a skeptical turn of mind in his *Essays* (3rd ed. 1697, *Essay 7*). Himself a learned man, he disparages learning as checking thought; and, professing belief in the longevity of the patriarchs (p. 187), pronounces popery and pagan religion to be mere works of priestcraft (*Essay 1*). He detested theological controversy and intolerance, and seems to have been a Lockian.

being prosecuted. The propaganda, however, was resumed by Blount and his friends in small tracts, and after his suicide<sup>1</sup> in 1693 these were collected as the *Oracles of Reason* (1693), his collected works (without the *Apollonius*) appearing in 1695. By this time the political tension of the Revolution of 1688 was over; Le Clerc's work on the inspiration of the Old Testament, raising many doubts as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, had been translated in 1690; Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) had been translated into English in 1689, and had impressed in a similar sense a number of scholars; his *Ethica* had given a new direction to the theistic controversy; the Boyle Lecture had been established for the confutation of unbelievers; and after the political convulsion of 1688 has subsided it rains refutations. Atheism is now so fiercely attacked, and with such specific arguments—as in Bentley's Boyle Lectures (1692), Edwards's *Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism* (1695), and many other treatises—that there can be no question as to the private vogue of atheistic or agnostic opinions. If we are to judge solely from the apologetic literature, it was more common than deism. Yet it seems impossible to doubt that there were ten deists for one atheist. Bentley's admission that he never met an explicit atheist<sup>2</sup> suggests that much of the atheism warred against was tentative. It was only the deists who could venture on open avowals; and the replies to them were most discussed.

Much account was made of one of the most compendious, the *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (1697), by the nonjuror Charles Leslie; but this handy argument (which is really adopted without acknowledgment from an apologetic treatise by a French Protestant refugee, published in 1688<sup>3</sup>) was not only much bantered by deists, but was sharply censured as incompetent by the French Protestant Le Clerc;<sup>4</sup> and many other disputants had to come to the rescue. A partial list will suffice to show the rate of increase of the ferment:—

1683. Dr. Rust, *Discourse on the Use of Reason in.....Religion, against Enthusiasts and Deists*.  
1685. Duke of Buckingham, *A Short Discourse upon the Reasonableness of men's having a religion or worship of God*.  
,, *The Atheist Unmask'd*. By a Person of Honour.

<sup>1</sup> All that is known of this tragedy is that Blount loved his deceased wife's sister and wished to marry her; but she held it unlawful, and he was in despair. According to Pope, a sufficiently untrustworthy authority, he "gave himself a stab in the arm, as pretending to kill himself, of the consequence of which he really died" (note to *Epilogue to the Satires*, i, 123). An overstrung nervous system may be diagnosed from his writing.

<sup>2</sup> Boyle Lectures on Atheism, ed. 1724, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion*, by Peter Allix, D.D., 1688, i, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> As cited by Leslie, *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated*, 1711, pp. 17-21.



1688. Peter Allix, D.D. *Reflexions*, etc., as above cited.
1691. Archbishop Tenison, *The Folly of Atheism*.  
 „ *Discourse of Natural and Revealed Religion*.  
 „ John Ray, *Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation*.  
 (Many reprints.)
1692. C. Ellis, *The Folly of Atheism Demonstrated*.  
 „ Bentley's *Sermons on Atheism*. (First Boyle Lectures.)
1693. Archbishop Davies, *An Anatomy of Atheism*. A poem.  
 „ *A Conference between an Atheist and his Friend*.
1694. J. Goodman, *A Winter Evening Conference between Neighbours*.  
 „ Bishop Kidder, *A Demonstration of the Messias*. (Boyle Lect.)
1695. John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.  
 „ John Edwards, B.D., *Some Thoughts concerning the Several Causes and occasions of Atheism*. (Directed against Locke.)
1696. *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*.  
 „ *Reflections on a Pamphlet*, etc. (the last named).  
 „ Sir C. Wolseley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism Demonstrated*. (Rep.)  
 „ Dr. Nichols' *Conference with a Theist*. Pt. I. (Answer to Blount.)  
 „ J. Edwards, D.D., *A Demonstration of the Evidence and Providence of God*.  
 „ E. Pelling, *Discourse.....on the Existence of God* (Pt. II in 1705).
1697. Stephen Eye, *A Discourse concerning Natural and Revealed Religion*.  
 „ Bishop Gastrell, *The Certainty and Necessity of Religion*. (Boyle Lect.)  
 „ H. Prideaux, *Discourse vindicating Christianity*, etc.  
 „ C. Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*.
1698. Dr. J. Harris, *A Refutation of Atheistical Objections*. (Boyle Lect.)  
 „ Thos. Emes, *The Atheist turned Deist, and the Deist turned Christian*.
1699. C. Lidgould, *Proclamation against Atheism*, etc.  
 „ J. Bradley, *An Impartial View of the Truth of Christianity*. (Answer to Blount.)
1700. Bishop Bradford, *The Credibility of the Christian Revelation*. (Boyle Lect.)  
 „ Rev. P. Berault, *Discourses on the Trinity, Atheism*, etc.
1701. T. Knaggs, *Against Atheism*.  
 „ W. Scot, *Discourses concerning the wisdom and goodness of God*.
1702. *A Confutation of Atheism*.  
 „ Dr. Stanhope, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion*.  
 (Boyle Lect.)
1704. *An Antidote of Atheism* (? Reprint of More).
1705. Translation of Herbert's *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles*.  
 „ Charles Gildon, *The Deist's Manual* (a recantation).  
 „ Ed. Pelling, *Discourse concerning the existence of God*. Part II.  
 „ Dr. Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc. (Boyle Lect. of 1704.)
1706. *A Preservative against Atheism and Infidelity*.  
 „ Th. Wise, B.D., *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism* (recast and abridgment of Cudworth).  
 „ T. Oldfield, *Mille Testes; against the Atheists, Deists, and Skepticks*.  
 „ *The Case of Deism fully and fairly stated, with Dialogue*, etc.
1707. Dr. J. Hancock, *Arguments to prove the Being of a God*. (Boyle Lect.)

Still there was no new deistic literature apart from Toland's

*Christianity not Mysterious* (1696) and his unauthorized issue (of course without author's name) of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* in 1699; and in that there is little direct conflict with orthodoxy, though it plainly enough implied that scripturalism would injuriously affect morals. It seems at that date, perhaps through the author's objection to its circulation, to have attracted little attention; but he tells that it incurred hostility.<sup>1</sup> Blount's famous stratagem of 1693<sup>2</sup> had led to the dropping of the official censorship of the press, the Licensing Act having been renewed for only two years in 1693 and dropped in 1695; but after the prompt issue of Blount's collected works in that year, and the appearance of Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* in the next, the new and comprehensive Blasphemy Law of 1697<sup>3</sup> served sufficiently to terrorize writers and printers in that regard for the time being.<sup>4</sup> Bare denial of the Trinity, of the truth of the Christian religion, or of the divine authority of the Scriptures, was made punishable by disability for any civil office; and on a second offence by three years' imprisonment, with withdrawal of all legal rights. The first clear gain from the freedom of the press was thus simply a cheapening of books in general. By the Licensing Act of Charles II, and by a separate patent, the Stationers' Company had a monopoly of printing and selling all classical authors; and while their editions were disgracefully bad, the importers of the excellent editions printed in Holland had to pay them a penalty of 6s. 8d. on each copy.<sup>5</sup> By the same Act, passed under clerical influence, the number even of master printers and letter-founders had been reduced, and the number of presses and apprentices strictly limited; and the total effect of the monopolies was that when Dutch-printed books were imported in exchange for English, the latter sold more cheaply at Amsterdam than they did in London, the English consumer, of course, bearing the burden.<sup>6</sup> The immediate effect, therefore, of the lapse of the Licensing Act must have been to cheapen greatly all

<sup>1</sup> *Characteristics*, ii, 263 (*Moralists*, pt. ii, § 3). One of the most dangerous positions from the orthodox point of view would be the thesis that while religion could do either great good or great harm to morals, atheism could do neither. (Bk. I, pt. iii, § 1.) Cp. Bacon's *Essay, Of Atheism*.

<sup>2</sup> Blount, after assailing in anonymous pamphlets Bohun the licenser, induced him to license a work entitled *King William and Queen Mary Conquerors*, which infuriated the nation. Macaulay calls the device "a base and wicked scheme." It was almost innocent in comparison with Blount's promotion of the "Popish plot" mania. See *Who Killed Sir Edmund Godfrey Berry?* by Alfred Marks, 1905, pp. 133-35, 150.

<sup>3</sup> See the text in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 19-21. Macaulay does not mention this measure.

<sup>4</sup> The Act had been preceded by a proclamation of the king, dated Feb. 24, 1697.

<sup>5</sup> As to an earlier monopoly of the London booksellers, see George Herbert's letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to Bacon, Jan. 29, 1620. In *Works of George Herbert*, ed. 1841, i, 217-18.

<sup>6</sup> See Locke's notes on the Licensing Act in Lord King's *Life of Locke*, 1829, pp. 203-206; Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 313-14; Macaulay's *History*, ii, 504.



foreign books by removal of duties, and at the same time to cheapen English books by leaving printing free. It will be seen above that the output of treatises *against* freethought at once increases in 1696. But the revolution of 1688, like the Great Rebellion, had doubtless given a new stimulus to freethinking; and the total effect of freer trade in books, even with a veto on "blasphemy," could only be to further it. This was ere long to be made plain.

## § 3

Alongside of the more popular and native influences, there were at work others, foreign and more academic; and even in professedly orthodox writers there are signs of the influence of deistic thought. Thus Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (written about 1634, published 1642) has been repeatedly characterized<sup>1</sup> as tending to promote deism by its tone and method; and there can be no question that it assumes a great prevalence of critical unbelief, to which its attitude is an odd combination of humorous cynicism and tranquil dogmatism, often recalling Montaigne,<sup>2</sup> and at times anticipating Emerson. There is little savour of confident belief in the smiling maxim that "to confirm and establish our belief 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own"; or in the avowal, "In divinity I love to keep the road; and though not in an implicit yet an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the Church, by which I move."<sup>3</sup> The pose of the typical believer: "I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est*,"<sup>4</sup> tells in his case of no anxious hours; and such smiling incuriousness is not conducive to conviction in others, especially when followed by a recital of some of the many insoluble dilemmas of Scripture. When he reasons he is merely self-subversive, as in the saying, "'Tis not a ridiculous devotion to say a prayer before a game at tables; for even in sortileges and matters of greatest uncertainty there is a settled and *pre-ordered* course of effects";<sup>5</sup> and after remarking that the notions of Fortune and astral influence "have perverted the devotion of many into atheism," he proceeds to avow that his

<sup>1</sup> Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, 1759, p. 120; Pünjer, i, 291, 300-301. Browne was even called an atheist. Arpe, *Apologia pro Vanino*, 1712, p. 27, citing Welschius. Mr. A. H. Bullen, in his introduction to his ed. of Marlowe (1885, vol. i, p. lviii), remarks that Browne, who "kept the road" in divinity, "exposed the vulnerable points in the Scriptural narratives with more acumen and gusto than the whole army of freethinkers, from Anthony Collins downwards." This is of course an extravagance, but, as Mr. Bullen remarks in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vii, 66, Browne discusses "with evident relish" the "seeming absurdities in the Scriptural narrative."

<sup>2</sup> Browne's Annotator points to the derivation of his skepticism from "that excellent French writer Monsieur Montaigne, in whom I often trace him" (Sayle's ed. 1904, i, p. xviii).

<sup>3</sup> *Religio Medici*, i, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* i, 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* i, 18.

many doubts never inclined him "to any point of infidelity or desperate positions of atheism; for I have been these many years of opinion there never was any."<sup>1</sup> Yet in his later treatise on *Vulgar Errors* (1645) he devotes a chapter<sup>2</sup> to the activities of Satan in instilling the belief that "there is no God at all.....that the necessity of his entity dependeth upon ours.....; that the natural truth of God is an artificial erection of Man, and the Creator himself but a subtle invention of the Creature." He further notes as coming from the same source "a secondary and deductive Atheism—that although men concede there is a God, yet should they deny his providence. And therefore assertions have flown about, that he intendeth only the care of the species or common natures, but letteth loose the guard of individuals, and single existences therein."<sup>3</sup> Browne now asserts merely that "many there are who cannot conceive that there was ever any absolute Atheist," and does not clearly affirm that Satan labours wholly in vain. The broad fact remains that he avows "reason is a rebel unto faith"; and in the *Vulgar Errors* he shows in his own reasoning much of the practical play of the new skepticism.<sup>4</sup> Yet it is finally on record that in 1664, on the trial of two women for witchcraft, Browne declared that the fits suffered from by the children said to have been bewitched "were natural, but heightened by the devil's co-operating with the malice of the witches, at whose instance he did the villainies."<sup>5</sup> This amazing deliverance is believed to have "turned the scale" in the minds of the jury against the poor women, and they were sentenced by the sitting judge, Sir Matthew Hale, to be hanged. It would seem that in Browne's latter years the irrational element in him, never long dormant, overpowered the rational. The judgment is a sad one to have to pass on one of the greatest masters of prose in any language. In other men, happily, the progression was different.

The opening even of Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, so far as it goes, falls little short of the deistic position.<sup>6</sup> A new vein of rationalism, too, is opened in the theological field by the great

<sup>1</sup> *Religio Medici*, i, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. I, ch. x.

<sup>3</sup> Here we have a theorem independently reached later (with the substitution of Nature for God) by Mary Wollstonecraft and Tennyson in turn. Browne cites yet another: "that he looks not below the moon, but hath resigned the regiment of sublunary affairs unto inferior deputations"—a thesis adopted in effect by Cudworth.

<sup>4</sup> By an error of the press, Browne is made in Mr. Sayle's excellent reprint (i, 108) to begin a sentence in the middle of a clause, with an odd result:—"I do confess I am an Atheist. I cannot persuade myself to honour that the world adores." The passage should obviously read: "to that subterraneous Idol [avarice] and God of the Earth I do confess I am an Atheist," etc.

<sup>5</sup> Hutchinson, *Histor. Essay Conc. Witchcraft*, 1718, p. 118; 2nd ed. 1720, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, p. 33.



Cambridge scholar John Spencer, whose *Discourse concerning Prodigies* (1663; 2nd ed. 1665), though quite orthodox in its main positions, has in part the effect of a plea for naturalism as against supernaturalism. Spencer's great work, *De legibus Hebraeorum* (1685), is, apart from Spinoza, the most scientific view of Hebrew institutions produced before the rise of German theological rationalism in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Holding most of the Jewish rites to have been planned by the deity as substitutes for or safeguards against those of the Gentiles which they resembled, he unconsciously laid, with Herbert, the foundations of comparative hierology, bringing to the work a learning which is still serviceable to scholars.<sup>1</sup> And there were yet other new departures by clerical writers, who of course exhibit the difficulty of attaining a consistent rationalism.

One clergyman, Joseph Glanvill, is found publishing a treatise on *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661; amended in 1665 under the title *Scepsis Scientifica*),<sup>2</sup> wherein, with careful reservation of religion, the spirit of critical science is applied to the ordinary processes of opinion with much energy, and the "mechanical philosophy" of Descartes is embraced with zeal. Following Raleigh and Hobbes,<sup>3</sup> Glanvill also puts the positive view of causation<sup>4</sup> afterwards fully developed by Hume.<sup>5</sup> Yet he not only vetoed all innovation in "divinity," but held stoutly by the crudest forms of the belief in witchcraft, and was with Henry More its chief English champion in his day against rational disbelief.<sup>6</sup> In religion he had so little of the skeptical faculty that he declared "Our religious foundations are fastened at the pillars of the intellectual world, and the grand articles of our belief as demonstrable as geometry. Nor will ever either the subtle attempts of the resolved Atheist, or the passionate hurricanes of the wild enthusiast, any more be able to prevail against the reason our faith is built on, than the blustering winds to blow out the Sun."<sup>7</sup> He had his due reward in being philosophically assailed by the Catholic priest Thomas White as a promoter of skepticism,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 1889, pref. p. vi; Rev. Dr. Duff, *Hist. of Old Test. Criticism*, R. P. A. 1910, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> This appears again, much curtailed and "so altered as to be in a manner new," in its author's collected *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Religion and Philosophy* (1676), under the title *Against Confidence in Philosophy*.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Humane Nature* (1640), ch. iv, §§ 7-9. <sup>4</sup> *Scepsis Scientifica*, ch. 23, § 1.

<sup>5</sup> See the passages compared by Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. ii, 338.

<sup>6</sup> In his *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (4th ed. 1668), *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681; 3rd ed. 1689), and *A Whip to the Droll, Fidler to the Atheist* (1688—a letter to Henry More, who was zealous on the same lines). These works seem to have been much more widely circulated than the *Scepsis Scientifica*.

<sup>7</sup> *Scepsis*, ch. 20, § 3. <sup>8</sup> See Glanvill's reply in a letter to a friend (1665), re-written as *Essay II. Of Scepticism and Certainty*: in *A short Reply to the learned Mr. Thomas White in his collected Essays on Several Important Subjects*, 1676.

and by an Anglican clergyman, wroth with the Royal Society and all its works, as an infidel and an atheist.<sup>1</sup>

This was as true as clerical charges of the kind usually were in the period. But without any animus or violence of interpretation, a reader of Glanvill's visitation sermon on *The Agreement of Reason and Religion*<sup>2</sup> might have inferred that he was a deist. It sets forth that "religion primarily and mainly consists in worship and vertue," and that it "in a secondary sense consists in some principles relating to the worship of God, and of his Son, in the ways of devout and vertuous living"; Christianity having "superadded" baptism and the Lord's Supper to "the religion of mankind." Apart from his obsession as to witchcraft—and perhaps even as to that—Glanvill seems to have grown more and more rationalistic in his later years. The *Scepsis* omits some of the credulous flights of the *Vanity of Dogmatizing*;<sup>3</sup> the re-written version in the collected *Essays* omits such dithyrambs as that above quoted; and the sermon in its revised form sets out with the emphatic declaration: "There is not anything that I know which hath done more mischief to religion than the disparaging of reason under pretence of respect and favour to it; for hereby the very foundations of Christian faith have been undermined, and the world prepared for atheism. And if reason must not be heard, the *Being* of a God and the authority of Scripture can neither be proved nor defended; and so our faith drops to the ground like an house that hath no foundation." Such reasoning could not but be suspect to the orthodoxy of the age.

Apart from the influence of Hobbes, who, like Descartes, shaped his thinking from the starting-point of Galileo, the Cartesian philosophy played in England a great transitional part. At the university of Cambridge it was already naturalized;<sup>4</sup> and the influence of Glanvill, who was an active member of the Royal Society, must have carried it further. The remarkable treatise of the anatomist Glisson,<sup>5</sup> *De natura substantiæ energetica* (1672), suggests the influence of either Descartes or Gassendi; and it is remarkable that the clerical moralist Cumberland, writing his *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ* (1672) in reply to Hobbes, not only takes up a utilitarian position akin to Hobbes's own, and expressly avoids any appeal to the theological

<sup>1</sup> See the reply in *PLUS ULTRA: or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the days of Aristotle*, 1668, Epist. Ded. Pref. ch. xviii, and Conclusion. [The re-written treatise, in the collected *Essays*, eliminates the controversial matter.]

<sup>2</sup> First printed with Glanvill's *Philosophia Pia* in 1671. Rep. as an essay in the collected *Essays*. <sup>3</sup> Owen, pref. to *Scepsis*, pp. xx-xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Owen, pref. to ed. of *Scepsis Scientifica*, p. ix.

<sup>5</sup> Of whom, however, a high medical authority declares that, "as a physiologist, he was sunk in realism" (that is, metaphysical apriorism). Prof. T. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, p. 44.



doctrine of future punishments, but introduces physiology into his ethic to the extent of partially figuring as an ethical materialist.<sup>1</sup> In regard to Gassendi's direct influence it has to be noted that in 1659 there appeared *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*, translated by "A Person of Quality," from P. Gassendus; and further that, as is remarked by Reid, Locke borrowed more from Gassendi than from any other writer.<sup>2</sup>

[It is stated by Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. i, 32) that in England the philosophy of Descartes made no distinguished disciples; and that John Norris "seems to be the only exception to the general indifference." This overlooks (1) Glanvill, who constantly cites and applauds Descartes (*Scepsis Scientifica*, passim). (2) In Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, again (1668), one of the disputants is made to speak (*Dial.* i, ch. xxiv) of "that admired wit Descartes"; and he later praises him even when passing censure (above, p. 65). More had been one of the admirers in his youth, and changed his view (cp. Ward's *Life of Dr. Henry More*, pp. 63-64). But his first letter to Descartes begins: "Quanta voluptate perfusus est animus meus, Vir clarissime, scriptis tuis legendis, nemo quisquam præter te unum potest conjectare." (3) There was published in 1670 a translation of Des Fournellis's letter in defence of the Cartesian system, with François Bayle's *General System of the Cartesian Philosophy*. (4) The continual objections to the atheistic tendency of Descartes throughout Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* imply anything but "general indifference"; and (5) Barrow's tone in venturing to oppose him (cit. in Whewell's *Philosophy of Discovery*, 1860, p. 179) pays tribute to his great influence. (6) Molyneux, in the preface to his translation of the *Six Metaphysical Meditations* of Descartes in 1680, speaks of him as "this excellent philosopher" and "this prodigious man." (7) Maxwell, in a note to his translation (1727) of Bishop Cumberland's *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ*, remarks that the doctrine of a universal *plenum* was accepted from the Cartesian philosophy by Cumberland, "in whose time that philosophy prevailed much" (p. 120). See again (8) Clarke's Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter (1718) as to the "universal prevalence" of Descartes's notions in natural philosophy. (9) The Scottish Lord President Forbes (d. 1747) summed up that "Descartes's romance kept entire possession of men's belief for fully fifty years" (*Works*, ii, 132). (10) And his fellow-judge, Sir William Anstruther, in his "Discourse against Atheism" (*Essays, Moral and Divine*, 1701, pp. 6, 8, 9), cites with much approval

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Whewell, as last cited, pp. 75-83; Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, iv, 159-71.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Essay I, ch. i; Hamilton's ed. of *Works*, p. 226. Glanvill calls Gassendi "that noble wit." (*Scepsis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 151.)

the theistic argument of "the celebrated Descartes" as "the last evidences which appeared upon the stage of learning" in that connection.

Cp. Berkeley, *Siris*, § 331. Of Berkeley himself, Professor Adamson writes (*Encyc. Brit.* iii, 589) that "Descartes and Locke.....are his real masters in speculation." The Cartesian view of the eternity and infinity of matter had further become an accepted ground for "philosophical atheists" in England before the end of the century (Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke and his Friends*, 1708, p. 46). As to the many writers who charged Descartes with promoting atheism, see Mosheim's notes in Harrison's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, i, 275-76; Clarke, as above cited; Leibnitz's letter to Philip, cited by Latta, *Leibnitz*, 1898, p. 8, note; and Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 315.

Sir Leslie Stephen seems to have followed, under a misapprehension, Whewell, who contends merely that the Cartesian doctrine of vortices was never widely accepted in England (*Philos. of Discovery*, pp. 177-78; cp. *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, ed. 1857, ii, 107, 147-48). Buckle was perhaps similarly misled when he wrote in his note-book: "Descartes was never popular in England" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 269). Whewell himself mentions that Clarke, soon after taking his degree at Cambridge, "was actively engaged in introducing into the academic course of study, first, the philosophy of Descartes in its best form, and, next, the philosophy of Newton" (*Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 97-98). And Professor Fowler, in correcting his first remarks on the point, decides that "many of the mathematical teachers at Cambridge continued to teach the Cartesian system for some time after the publication of Newton's *Principia*" (ed. of *Nov. Org.*, p. xi).

It is clear, however, that insofar as new science set up a direct conflict with Scriptural assumptions it gained ground but slowly and indirectly. It is difficult to-day to realize with what difficulty the Copernican and Galilean doctrine of the earth's rotation and movement round the sun found acceptance even among studious men. We have seen that Bacon finally rejected it. And as Professor Masson points out,<sup>1</sup> not only does Milton seem uncertain to the last concerning the truth of the Copernican system, but his friends and literary associates, the "Smectymnuans," in their answer to Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance* (1641), had pointed to the Copernican doctrine as an unquestioned instance of a supreme absurdity. Glanvill, remarking in 1665 that "it is generally opinion'd that the Earth rests as the world's centre," avows that "for a man to go

<sup>1</sup> *Poet. Works of Milton*, 1874, Introd. i, 92 sq.



about to counter-argue this belief is as fruitless as to whistle against the winds. I shall not undertake to maintain the paradox that confronts this almost Catholic opinion. Its assertion would be entertained with the hoot of the rabble; the very mention of it as possible, is among the most ridiculous."<sup>1</sup> All he ventures to do is to show that the senses do not really vouch the ordinary view. Not till the eighteenth century, probably, did the common run of educated people anywhere accept the scientific teaching.

On the other hand, however, there was growing up not a little Socinian and other Unitarianism, for some variety of which we have seen two men burned in 1612. Church measures had been taken against the importation of Socinian books as early as 1640. The famous Lord Falkland, slain in the Civil War, is supposed to have leant to that opinion;<sup>2</sup> and Chillingworth, whose *Religion of Protestants* (1637) was already a remarkable application of rational tests to ecclesiastical questions in defiance of patristic authority,<sup>3</sup> seems in his old age to have turned Socinian.<sup>4</sup> Violent attacks on the Trinity are noted among the heresies of 1646.<sup>5</sup> Colonel John Fry, one of the regicides, who in Parliament was accused of rejecting the Trinity, cleared himself by explaining that he simply objected to the terms "persons" and "subsistence," but was one of those who sought to help the persecuted Unitarian Biddle. In 1652 the Parliament ordered the destruction of a certain Socinian Catechism; and by 1655 the heresy seems to have become common.<sup>6</sup> It is now certain that Milton was substantially a Unitarian,<sup>7</sup> and that Locke and Newton were at heart no less so.<sup>8</sup>

The temper of the Unitarian school appears perhaps at its best in the anonymous *Rational Catechism* published in 1686. It purports to be "an instructive conference between a father and his son," and is dedicated by the father to his two daughters. The "Catechism" rises above the common run of its species in that it is really a dialogue, in which the rôles are at times reversed, and the catechumen is permitted to think and speak for himself. The exposition is entirely unevangelical. Right religion is declared to consist in right conduct; and while the actuality of the Christian record is maintained on argued grounds, on the lines of Grotius and

<sup>1</sup> *Scep sis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 66. In the condensed version of the treatise in Glanvill's collected *Essays* (1676, p. 20), the language is to the same effect.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, Martineau's ed. p. 204; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, iii, 152-53.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 347-51; 1-vol. ed. pp. 196-99.

<sup>4</sup> Tayler, *Retrospect*, pp. 204-205; Wallace, iii, 154-56.

<sup>5</sup> *Gangræna*, pt. i, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Tayler, p. 221. As to Biddle, the chief propagandist of the sect, see pp. 221-24, and Wallace, Art. 285.

<sup>7</sup> Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*. Cp. Brown's ed. (Clarendon Press) of the poems of Milton, ii, 30.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. v.

Parker, the doctrine of salvation by faith is strictly excluded, future happiness being posited as the reward of good life, not of faith. There is no negation, the author's object being avowedly peace and conciliation; but the Epistle Dedicatory declares that religious reasoners have hitherto "failed in their foundation-work. They have too much slighted that philosophy which is the natural religion of all men; and which, being natural, must needs be universal and eternal: and upon which therefore, or at least in conformity with which, all instituted and revealed religion must be supposed to be built." We have here in effect the position taken up by Toland ten years later; and, in germ, the principle which developed deism, albeit in connection with an affirmation of the truth of the Christian records. Of the central Christian doctrine there is no acceptance, though there is laudation of Jesus; and reprints after 1695 bore the motto, from Locke:<sup>1</sup> "As the foundation of virtue, there ought very earnestly to be imprinted on the mind of a young man a true notion of God, as of the independent supreme Being, Author, and Maker of all things: And, consequent to this, instil into him a love and reverence of this supreme Being." We are already more than half-way from Unitarianism to deism.

Indeed, the theism of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* undermined even his Unitarian Scripturalism, inasmuch as it denies, albeit confusedly, that revelation can ever override reason. In one passage he declares that "reason is natural revelation," while "revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouchsafes the truth of."<sup>2</sup> This compromise appears to be borrowed from Spinoza, who had put it with similar vagueness in his great *Tractatus*,<sup>3</sup> of which pre-eminent work Locke cannot have been ignorant, though he protested himself little read in the works of Hobbes and Spinoza, "those justly decried names."<sup>4</sup> The *Tractatus* being translated into English in the same year with the publication of the *Essay*, its influence would concur with Locke's in a widened circle of readers; and the substantially naturalistic doctrine of both books inevitably promoted the deistic movement. We have Locke's own avowal that he had many doubts as to the Biblical narratives;<sup>5</sup> and he never attempts to remove the doubts of others. Since, however, his doctrine provided a sphere for revelation on the territory of ignorance, giving it prerogative where its assertions

<sup>1</sup> *Of Education*, § 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, c. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xix, § 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester*.

<sup>5</sup> *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of his Friends*, 1708, pp. 302-304.



were outside knowledge, it counted substantially for Unitarianism insofar as it did not lead to deism.

See the *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xviii. Locke's treatment of revelation may be said to be the last and most attenuated form of the doctrine of "two-fold truth." On his principle, any proposition in a professed revelation that was not provable or disprovable by reason and knowledge must pass as true. His final position, that "whatever is divine revelation ought to overrule all our opinions" (bk. iv, ch. xviii, § 10), is tolerably elastic, inasmuch as he really reserves the question of the actuality of revelation. Thus he evades the central issue. Naturally he was by critical foreigners classed as a deist. Cp. Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 36. The German historian Tennemann sums up that Clarke wrote his apologetic works because "the consequences of the empiricism of Locke had become so decidedly favourable to the cause of atheism, skepticism, materialism, and irreligion" (*Manual of the Hist. of Philos. Eng.* tr. Bohn ed. § 349).

In his "practical" treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) Locke played a similar part. It was inspired by the genuine concern for social peace which had moved him to write an essay on Toleration as early as 1667,<sup>1</sup> and to produce from 1685 onwards his famous *Letters on Toleration*, by far the most persuasive appeal of the kind that had yet been produced;<sup>2</sup> all the more successful so far as it went, doubtless, because the first Letter ended with a memorable capitulation to bigotry: "Lastly, those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides, also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration." This handsome endorsement of the religion which had repeatedly "dissolved all" in a pandemonium of internecine hate, as compared with the one heresy which had never broken treaties or shed blood, is presumably more of a prudent surrender to normal fanaticism than an expression of the philosopher's own state of mind;<sup>3</sup> and his treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is an attempt to limit religion to a

<sup>1</sup> Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, 1876, ii, 34.

<sup>2</sup> The first Letter, written while he was hiding in Holland in 1685, was in Latin, but was translated into French, Dutch, and English.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Fox Bourne, in his biography (ii, 41), apologizes for the lapse, so alien to his own ideals, by the remark that "the atheism then in vogue was of a very violent and rampant sort." It is to be feared that this palliation will not hold good—at least, the present writer has been unable to trace the atheism in question. For "atheism" we had better read "religion."

humane ethic, with sacraments and mysteries reduced to ceremonies, while claiming that the gospel ethic was "now with divine authority established into a legible law, far surpassing all that philosophy and human reason had attained to."<sup>1</sup> Its effect was, however, to promote rationalism without doing much to mitigate the fanaticism of belief.

Locke's practical position has been fairly summed up by Prof. Bain: "Locke proposed, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, to ascertain the exact meaning of Christianity, by casting aside all the glosses of commentators and divines, and applying his own unassisted judgment to spell out its teachings.....The fallacy of his position obviously was that he could not strip himself of his education and acquired notions.....He seemed unconscious of the necessity of trying to make allowance for his unavoidable prepossessions. In consequence, he simply fell into an old groove of received doctrines; and these he handled under the set purpose of simplifying the fundamentals of Christianity to the utmost. Such purpose was not the result of his Bible study, but of his wish to overcome the political difficulties of the time. He found, by keeping close to the Gospels and making proper selections from the Epistles, that the belief in Christ as the Messiah could be shown to be the central fact of the Christian faith; that the other main doctrines followed out of this by a process of reasoning; and that, as all minds might not perform the process alike, these doctrines could not be essential to the practice of Christianity. He got out of the difficulty of framing a creed, as many others have done, by simply using Scripture language, without subjecting it to any very strict definition; certainly without the operation of stripping the meaning of its words, to see what it amounted to. That his short and easy method was not very successful the history of the deistical controversy sufficiently proves" (*Practical Essays*, pp. 226-27).

That Locke was felt to have injured orthodoxy is further proved by the many attacks made on him from the orthodox side. Even the first Letter on Toleration elicited retorts, one of which claims to demonstrate "the Absurdity and Impiety of an Absolute Toleration."<sup>2</sup> On his positive teachings he was assailed by Bishop Stillingfleet; by the Rev. John Milner, B.D.; by the Rev. John Morris; by William Carrol; and by the Rev. John Edwards, B.D.;<sup>3</sup> his only assailant with a rationalistic repute being Dr. Thomas Burnet. Some attacked him on his *Essays*; some on his *Reasonableness of Christianity*; orthodoxy finding in both the same tendency to "subvert the nature

<sup>1</sup> *Second Vindication of "The Reasonableness of Christianity,"* 1697, pref.

<sup>2</sup> Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 181.

<sup>3</sup> Son of the Presbyterian author of the famous *Gangrena*.



and use of divine revelation and faith."<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Bolde, who defended him in *Some Considerations* published in 1699, the hostile clericals had treated him "with a rudeness peculiar to some who make a profession of the Christian religion, and seem to pride themselves in being the clergy of the Church of England."<sup>2</sup> This is especially true of Edwards, a notably ignoble type;<sup>3</sup> but hardly of Milner, whose later *Account of Mr. Locke's Religion out of his Own Writings, and in his Own Words* (1700), pressed him shrewdly on the score of his "Socinianism." In the eyes of a pietist like William Law, again, Locke's conception of the infant mind as a *tabula rasa* was "dangerous to religion," besides being philosophically false.<sup>4</sup> Yet Locke agreed with Law<sup>5</sup> that moral obligation is dependent solely on the will of God—a doctrine denounced by the deist Shaftesbury as the negation of morality.

See the *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, pt. iii, § 2; and the *Letters to a Student*, under date June 3, 1709 (p. 403 in Rand's *Life, Letters, etc., of Shaftesbury*, 1900). The extraordinary letter of Newton to Locke, written just after or during a spell of insanity, first apologizes for having believed that Locke "endeavoured to embroil me with women and by other means," and goes on to beg pardon "for representing that you struck at the root of morality, in a principle you laid down in your book of ideas." In his subsequent letter, replying to that of Locke granting forgiveness and gently asking for details, he writes: "What I said of your book I remember not." (Letters of September 16 and October 5, 1693, given in Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 226-27, and Sir D. Brewster's *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton*, 1855, ii, 148-51.) Newton, who had been on very friendly terms with Locke, must have been repeating, when his mind was disordered, criticisms otherwise current. After printing in full the letters above cited, Brewster insists, on his principle of sacrificing all other considerations to Newton's glory (cp. De Morgan, *Newton: his Friend: and his Niece*, 1885, pp. 99-111), that all the while Newton was "in the full possession of his mental powers." The whole diction of the first letter tells the contrary. If we are not to suppose that Newton had been temporarily insane, we must think of his judgment as even less rational, apart from physics, than it is

<sup>1</sup> Said by Carrol, *Dissertation on Mr. Locke's Essay*, 1706, cited by Anthony Collins, *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason*, 1709, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 438.

<sup>3</sup> Whose calibre may be gathered from his egregious doctoral thesis, *Concio ad clerum de demonum malorum existentia et natura* (1700). After a list of the deniers of evil spirits, from the Sadducees and Sallustius to Bekker and Van Dale, he addresses to his "dilectissimi in Christo fratres" the exordium: "En, Academici, veteres ac hodiernos Sadduceos! quibuscum tota Atheorum cohors amicissimè congruit; nam qui divinum numen, iidem ipsi infernales spiritus acriter negant."

<sup>4</sup> *Confutation of Warburton* (1757) in *Extracts from Law's Works*, 1768, i, 208-209.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. the *Essay*, bk. i, ch. iii, § 6, with Law's *Case of Reason*, in *Extracts*, as cited, p. 36.

seen to be in his dissertations on prophecy. Certainly Newton was at all times apt to be suspicious of his friends to the point of moral disease (see his attack on Montague, in his letter to Locke of January 26, 1691-1692: in Fox Bourne, ii, 218; and cp. De Morgan, as cited, p. 146); but the letter to Locke indicates a point at which the normal malady had upset the mental balance. It remains, nevertheless, part of the evidence as to bitter orthodox criticism of Locke.

On the whole, it is clear, the effect of his work, especially of his naturalistic psychology, was to make for rationalism; and his compromises furthered instead of checking the movement of unbelief. His ideal of practical and undogmatic Christianity, indeed, was hardly distinguishable from that of Hobbes,<sup>1</sup> and, as previously set forth by the Rev. Arthur Bury in his *Naked Gospel* (1690), was so repugnant to the Church that that book was burned at Oxford as heretical.<sup>2</sup> Locke's position as a believing Christian was indeed extremely weak, and could easily have been demolished by a competent deist, such as Collins,<sup>3</sup> or a skeptical dogmatist who could control his temper and avoid the gross misrepresentation so often resorted to by Locke's orthodox enemies. But by the deists he was valued as an auxiliary, and by many latitudinarian Christians as a helper towards a rationalistic if not a logical compromise.

Rationalism of one or the other tint, in fact, seems to have spread in all directions. Deism was ascribed to some of the most eminent public men. Bishop Burnet has a violent passage on Sir William Temple, to the effect that "He had a true judgment in affairs, and very good principles with relation to government, but in nothing else. He seemed to think that things are as they were from all eternity; at least he thought religion was only for the mob. He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius in China, who were atheists themselves, but left religion to the rabble."<sup>4</sup> The praise of Confucius is the note of deism; and Burnet rightly held that no orthodox Christian in those days would sound it. Other prominent men revealed their religious liberalism. The accomplished and influential George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, often spoken of as

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Fox Bourne, ii, 404-405.

<sup>3</sup> An ostensibly orthodox Professor of our own day has written that Locke's doctrine as to religion and ethics "shows at once the sincerity of his religious convictions and the inadequate conception he had formed to himself of the grounds and nature of moral philosophy" (Fowler, *Locke*, 1880, p. 76).

<sup>4</sup> Burnet, *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 251. Burnet adds that Temple "was a corrupter of all that came near him." The 1838 editor protests against the whole attack as the "most unfair and exaggerated" of Burnet's portraits; and a writer in *The Present State of the Republic of Letters*, Jan., 1736, p. 26, carries the defence to claiming orthodoxy for Temple. But the whole cast of his thought is deistic. Cp. the *Essay upon the Origin and Nature of Government*, and ch. v of the *Observations upon the United Provinces* (Works, ed. 1770, i, 29, 36, 170-74).



a deist, and even as an atheist, by his contemporaries,<sup>1</sup> appears clearly from his own writings to have been either that or a Unitarian;<sup>2</sup> and it is not improbable that the similar gossip concerning Lord Keeper Somers was substantially true.<sup>3</sup>

That Sir Isaac Newton was "some kind of Unitarian"<sup>4</sup> is proved by documents long withheld from publication, and disclosed only in the second edition of Sir David Brewster's *Memoirs*. There is indeed no question that he remained a mere scripturalist, handling the texts as such,<sup>5</sup> and wasting much time in vain interpretations of Daniel and the Apocalypse.<sup>6</sup> Temperamentally, also, he was averse to anything like bold discussion, declaring that "those at Cambridge ought not to judge and censure their superiors, but to obey and honour them, according to the law and the doctrine of passive obedience"<sup>7</sup>—this after he had sat on the Convention which deposed James II. In no aspect, indeed, apart from his supreme scientific genius, does he appear as morally<sup>8</sup> or intellectually pre-eminent; and even on the side of science he was limited by his theological presuppositions, as when he rejected the nebular hypothesis, writing to Bentley that "the growth of new systems out of old ones, without the mediation of a Divine power, seems to me apparently absurd."<sup>9</sup> There is therefore more than usual absurdity in the proclamation of his pious biographer that "the apostle of infidelity cowers beneath the implied rebuke"<sup>10</sup> of his orthodoxy. The very anxiety shown by Newton and his friends<sup>11</sup> to checkmate "the infidels" is a proof that his religious work was not scientific even in inception, but the expression of his neurotic side; and the attempt of some of his scientific admirers to show that his religious researches belong solely to the years of his decline is a corresponding oversight. Newton was always pathologically prepossessed on the side of his religion, and subordinated his science to his theology even in the *Principia*. It is therefore all the more significant of the set of opinion in his day that, tied as he was to Scriptural interpretations, he drew away from orthodox dogma as to the Trinity. Not only does he show himself a destructive critic of Trinitarian texts and an opponent of Athanasius<sup>12</sup>: he expressly formulates the propositions (1) that "there is one God the Father.....and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"; (2) that "the Father is the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Macaulay, *History*, ch. ii. Student's ed. i, 120.

<sup>2</sup> Compare his *Advice to a Daughter*, § 1 (in *Miscellanies*, 1700), and his *Political Thoughts and Reflections: Religion*. <sup>3</sup> See Macaulay, ch. xx. Student's ed. ii, 459.

<sup>4</sup> De Morgan, as cited, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 327 sq.

<sup>6</sup> *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Dr. Bentley*, ed. 1756, p. 25. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 97-102.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 115.

<sup>8</sup> See Brewster, ii, 318, 321-22, 323, 331 sq., 342 sq.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. De Morgan, pp. 133-45.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* pp. 315-16.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* pp. 342-46.

invisible God whom no eye hath seen or can see. All other beings are sometimes visible"; and (3) that "the Father hath life in himself, and hath given the Son to have life in himself."<sup>1</sup> Such opinions, of course, could not be published: under the Act of 1697 they would have made Newton liable to loss of office and all civil rights. In his own day, therefore, his opinions were rather gossipped-of than known;<sup>2</sup> but insofar as his heresy was realized, it must have wrought much more for unbelief than could be achieved for orthodoxy by his surprisingly commonplace strictures on atheism, which show the ordinary inability to see what atheism means.

The argument of his *Short Scheme of True Religion* brackets atheism with idolatry, and goes on: "Atheism is so senseless and odious to mankind that it never had many professors. Can it be by accident that all birds, beasts, and men have their right side and left side alike shaped (except in their bowels), and just two eyes, and no more, on either side of the face?" etc. (Brewster, ii, 347). The logical implication is that a monstrous organism, with the sides unlike, represents "accident," and that in that case there has either been no causation or no "purpose" by Omnipotence. It is only fair to remember that no avowedly "atheistic" argument could in Newton's day find publication; but his remarks are those of a man who had never contemplated philosophically the negation of his own religious sentiment at the point in question. Brewster, whose judgment and good faith are alike precarious, writes that "When Voltaire asserted that Sir Isaac explained the prophecies in the same manner as those who went before him, he only exhibited his ignorance of what Newton wrote, and what others had written" (ii, 331, note; 355). The writer did not understand what he censured. Voltaire meant that Newton's treatment of prophecy is on the same plane of credulity as that of his orthodox predecessors.

Even within the sphere of the Church the Unitarian tendency, with or without deistic introduction, was traceable. Archbishop Tillotson (d. 1694) was often accused of Socinianism; and in the next generation was smilingly spoken of by Anthony Collins as a leading Freethinker. The pious Dr. Hickes had in fact declared of the Archbishop that "he caused several to turn atheists and ridicule the priesthood and religion."<sup>3</sup> The heresy must have been encouraged even within the Church by the scandal which broke out when Dean Sherlock's *Vindication of Trinitarianism* (1690), written in reply to

<sup>1</sup> Brewster, p. 349. See the remaining articles, and App. XXX, p. 532.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourse on Tillotson and Burnet*, pp. 38, 40, 74, cited by Collins, *Discourse of Freethinking*, 1713, pp. 171-72.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 388.



a widely-circulated antitrinitarian compilation,<sup>1</sup> was attacked by Dean South<sup>2</sup> as the work of a Tritheist. The plea of Dr. Wallis, Locke's old teacher, that a doctrine of "three somewhats"—he objected to the term "persons"—in one God was as reasonable as the concept of three dimensions,<sup>3</sup> was of course only a heresy the more. Outside the Church, William Penn, the great Quaker, held a partially Unitarian attitude;<sup>4</sup> and the first of his many imprisonments was on a charge of "blasphemy and heresy" in respect of his treatise *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, which denied (1) that there were in the One God "three distinct and separate persons"; (2) the doctrine of the need of "plenary satisfaction"; and (3) the justification of sinners by "an imputative righteousness." But though many of the early Quakers seem to have shunned the doctrine of the Trinity, Penn really affirmed the divinity of Christ, and was not a Socinian but a Sabellian in his theology. Positive Unitarianism all the while was being pushed by a number of tracts which escaped prosecution, being prudently handled by Locke's friend, Thomas Firmin.<sup>5</sup> A new impulse had been given to Unitarianism by the learning and critical energy of the Prussian Dr. Zwicker, who had settled in Holland;<sup>6</sup> and among those Englishmen whom his works had found ready for agreement was Gilbert Clerke (b. 1641), who, like several later heretics, was educated at Sidney College, Cambridge. In 1695 he published a Unitarian work entitled *Anti-Nicenismus*, and two other tracts in Latin, all replying to the orthodox polemic of Dr. Bull, against whom another Unitarian had written *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1694, bitterly resenting his violence.<sup>7</sup> In 1695 appeared yet another treatise of the same school, *The Judgment of the Fathers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*. Much was thus done on Unitarian lines to prepare an audience for the deists of the next reign.<sup>8</sup> But the most effective influence was probably the ludicrous strife of the orthodox clergy as to what orthodoxy was. The fray over the doctrine of the Trinity waxed so

<sup>1</sup> The *Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius* (author unknown), printed by Thomas Firmin. Late in 1693 appeared another antitrinitarian tract, by William Freke, who was prosecuted, fined £500, and ordered to make a recantation in the Four Courts of Westminster Hall. The book was burnt by the hangman. Wallace, *Art.* 354. There had also been "two quarto volumes of tracts in support of Unitarianism," published in 1691 (Dr. W. H. Drummond, *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, 1842, p. 17).

<sup>2</sup> "Locke's ribald schoolfellow of nearly fifty years ago" (Fox Bourne, II, 405).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* *ib.*

<sup>4</sup> Tayler, *Retrospect*, p. 226; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, I, 160-69.

<sup>5</sup> Fox Bourne, II, 405; Wallace, *art.* 353.

<sup>6</sup> Above, pp. 35-36.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 398.

<sup>8</sup> "Perhaps at no period was the Unitarian controversy so actively carried on in England as between 1690 and 1720." *History, Opinions, etc., of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 22.

furious, and the discredit cast on orthodoxy was so serious,<sup>1</sup> that in the year 1700 an Act of Parliament was passed forbidding the publication of any more works on the subject.

Meanwhile the so-called Latitudinarians,<sup>2</sup> all the while aiming as they did at a non-dogmatic Christianity, served as a connecting medium for the different forms of liberal thought; and a new element of critical disintegration was introduced by a speculative treatment of Genesis in the *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ* (1692) of Dr. Thomas Burnet, a professedly orthodox scholar, Master of the Charterhouse and chaplain in ordinary to King William, who nevertheless treated the Creation and Fall stories as allegories, and threw doubt on the Mosaic authorship of parts of the Pentateuch. Though the book was dedicated to the king, it aroused so much clerical hostility that the king was obliged to dismiss him from his post at court.<sup>3</sup> His ideas were partly popularized through a translation of two of his chapters, with a vindictory letter, in Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1695); and that they had considerable vogue may be gathered from the *Essay towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Mosaic History of the Fall of Adam*, by John Witty, published in 1705. Burnet, who published three sets of anonymous *Remarks* on the philosophy of Locke (1697-1699), criticizing its sensationist basis, figured after his death (1715), in posthumous publications, as a heretical theologian in other regards; and then played his part in the general deistic movement; but his allegorical view of Genesis does not seem to have seriously affected speculation in his time, the bulk of the debate turning on his earlier *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (1681; trans. 1684), to which there were many rejoinders, both scientific and orthodox. On this side he is unimportant, his science being wholly imaginative; and in the competition between his *Theory* and J. Woodward's *Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth* (1695) nothing was achieved for scientific progress.

Much more remarkable, but outside of popular discussion, were the *Evangelium medici* (1697) of Dr. B. CONNOR, wherein the gospel

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 113-15.—Tayler, *Retrospect*, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> As to whom see Tayler, *Retrospect*, ch. v. § 4. They are spoken of as "the new sect of Latitude-Men" in 1662; and in 1708 are said to be "at this day Low Churchmen." See *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, by "S. P." of Cambridge, 1662, reprinted in *The Phoenix*, vol. II, 1708, and pref. to that vol. From "S. P.'s" account it is clear that they connected with the new scientific movement, and leant to Cartesianism. As above noted, they included such prelates as Wilkins and Tillotson. The work of E. A. George, *Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude* (1908), deals with Hales, Chillingworth, Whichcote, H. More, Taylor, Browne, and Baxter.

<sup>3</sup> Toulmin, *Histor. View of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, p. 270. A main ground of the offence taken was a somewhat trivial dialogue in Burnet's book between Eve and the serpent, indicating the "popular" character of the tale. This was omitted from a Dutch edition at the author's request, and from the 3rd ed. 1733 (Toulmin, as cited). It is given in the partial translation in Blount's *Oracles of Reason*.



miracles were explained away, on lines later associated with German rationalism, as natural phenomena; and the curious treatise of Newton's friend, John Craig,<sup>1</sup> *Theologia christiana principia mathematica* (1699), wherein it is argued that all evidence grows progressively less valid in course of time;<sup>2</sup> and that accordingly the Christian religion will cease to be believed about the year 3144, when probably will occur the Second Coming. Connor, when attacked, protested his orthodoxy; Craig held successively two prebends of the Church of England;<sup>3</sup> and both lived and died unmolested, probably because they had the prudence to write in Latin, and maintained gravity of style. About this time, further, the title of "Rationalist" made some fresh headway as a designation, not of unbelievers, but of believers who sought to ground themselves on reason. Such books as those of Clifford and Boyle tell of much discussion as to the efficacy of "reason" in religious things; and in 1686, as above noted, there appears *A Rational Catechism*,<sup>4</sup> a substantially Unitarian production, notable for its aloofness from evangelical feeling, despite its many references to Biblical texts in support of its propositions. In the *Essays Moral and Divine* of the Scotch judge, Sir William Anstruther, published in 1701, there is a reference to "those who arrogantly term themselves Rationalists"<sup>5</sup> in the sense of claiming to find Christianity not only, as Locke put it, a reasonable religion, but one making no strain upon faith. Already the term had become potentially one of vituperation, and it is applied by the learned judge to "the wicked reprehended by the Psalmist."<sup>6</sup> Forty years later, however, it was still applied rather to the Christian who claimed to believe upon rational grounds than to the deist or unbeliever;<sup>7</sup> and it was to have a still longer lease of life in Germany as a name for theologians who believed in "Scripture" on condition that all miracles were explained away.

<sup>1</sup> See Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, II, 315-16, for a letter indicating Craig's religious attitude. He contributed to Dr. George Cheyne's *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, 1705. (Pref. to pt. I, ed. 1725.)

<sup>2</sup> See the note of Pope and Warburton on the *Dunciad*, IV, 462.

<sup>3</sup> See arts. in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

<sup>4</sup> *Essays* as cited, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> See *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (by Henry Dodwell, jr.), 1741, pp. 11, 34. Waterland, as cited by Bishop Hurst, treats the terms *Reasonist* and *Rationalist* as labels or nicknames of those who untruly profess to reason more scrupulously than other people. The former term may, however, have been set up as a result of Le Clerc's rendering of "the *Logos*," in John I, 1, by "Reason"—an argument to which Waterland repeatedly refers.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted at Amsterdam, 1712.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 30.

## CHAPTER XV

## FRENCH AND DUTCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. WE have seen France, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, pervaded in its upper classes by a freethought partly born of the knowledge that religion counted for little but harm in public affairs, partly the result of such argumentation as had been thrown out by Montaigne and codified by Charron. That it was not the freethinking of mere idle men of the world is clear when we note the names and writings of LA MOTHE LE VAYER (1588-1672), GUI PATIN (1601-1671), and GABRIEL NAUDÉ (1600-1653), all scholars, all heretics of the skeptical and rationalistic order. The last two indeed, sided with the Catholics in politics, Patin approving of the Fronde, and Naudé of the Massacre, on which ground they are sometimes claimed as believers.<sup>1</sup> But though in the nature of the case their inclusion on the side of freethought is not to be zealously contended for, they must be classed in terms of the balance of testimony. Patin was the admiring friend of Gassendi; and though he was never explicitly heretical, and indeed wrote of Socinianism as a pestilent doctrine,<sup>2</sup> his habit of irony and the risk of written avowals to correspondents must be kept in view in deciding on his cast of mind. He is constantly anti-clerical;<sup>3</sup> and the germinal skepticism of Montaigne and Charron clearly persists in him.

It is true that, as one critic puts it, such rationalists were not "quite clear whither they were bound. At first sight," he adds, "no one looks more negative than Gui Patin.....He was always congratulating himself on being 'delivered from the nightmare'; and he rivals the eighteenth century in the scorn he pours on priests, monks, and especially 'that black Loyolitic scum from Spain' which called itself the Society of Jesus. Yet Patin was

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Strowski, who is concerned to prove that the freethinkers of the period were mostly men-about-town, claims Patin as a Frondeur (*De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 215). But Patin's attitude in this matter was determined by his detestation of Mazarin, whom he regarded as an arch-scoundrel. Naudé's defence of the Massacre is forensic.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettres de Gui Patin*, No. 188, édit. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, I, 364.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Reveillé-Parise, as cited, *Notice sur Gui Patin*, pp. xxiii-xxvii, and Bayle, art. PATIN.



no freethinker. Skeptics who made game of the kernel of religion came quite as much under the lash of his tongue as bigots who dared defend its husks. His letters end with the characteristic confession: "*Credo in Deum, Christum crucifixum, etc.;.....De minimis non curat prator*" (Viscount St. Cyres in *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 73). But the last statement is an error, and Patin did not attack Gassendi, though he did Descartes. He says of Rabelais: "C'étoit un homme qui se moquoit de tout; en verité il y a bien des choses dont on doit raisonnablement se moquer.....elles sont presque tous remplies de vanité, d'imposture et d'ignorance: ceux qui sont un peu philosophes ne doivent-ils pas s'en moquer?" (Lett. 485, éd. cited, iii, 148). Again he writes that "la vie humaine n'est qu'un bureau de rencontre et un théâtre sur lesquels domine la fortune" (Lett. 726, iii, 620). This is pure Montaigne. The formula cited by Viscount St. Cyres is neither a general nor a final conclusion to the letters of Patin. It occurs, I think, only once (18 juillet, 1642, à M. Belin) in the 836 letters, and not at the end of that one (Lett. 55, éd. cited, i, 90).

Concerning his friend Naudé, Patin writes: "Je suis fort de l'avis de feu M. Naudé, qui disoit qu'il y avait quatre choses dont il se fallait garder, afin de n'être point trompé, savoir, de prophéties, de miracles, de révélations, et d'apparitions" (Lett. 353, éd. cited, ii, 490). Again, he writes of a symposium of Naudé, Gassendi, and himself: "Peut-être, tous trois, guéris de loup-garou et délivrés du mal des scrupules, qui est le tyran des consciences, nous irons peut-être jusque fort près du sanctuaire. Je fis l'an passé ce voyage de Gentilly avec M. Naudé, moi seul avec lui tête-à-tête; il n'y avait point de témoins, aussi n'y en falloit-il point: nous y parlâmes fort librement de tout, sans que personne en ait été scandalisé" (Lett. 362, ii, 508). This seems tolerably freethinking.

All that the Christian editor cares to claim upon the latter passage is that assuredly "l'unité de Dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme, l'égalité des hommes devant la loi, ces verités fondamentales de la raison et consacrées par le Christianisme, y étaient placées au premier rang" in the discussion. As to the skepticism of Naudé the editor remarks: "Ce qu'il y a de remarquable, c'est que Gui Patin soutenait que son ami.....avait puisé son opinion, en général très peu orthodoxe, en Italie, pendant le long séjour qu'il fit dans ce pays avec le cardinal Bagni" (ii, 490; cp. Lett. 816; iii, 758, where Naudé is again cited as making small account of religion).

Certainly Patin and Naudé are of less importance for freethought than La Mothe le Vayer. That scholar, a "Conseiller d'Etat ordinaire," tutor of the brother of Louis XIV, and one of the early members of the new Academy founded by Richelieu, is an interesting

figure<sup>1</sup> in the history of culture, being a skeptic of the school of Sextus Empiricus, and practically a great friend of tolerance. Standing in favour with Richelieu, he wrote at that statesman's suggestion a treatise *On the Virtue of the Heathen*,<sup>2</sup> justifying toleration by pagan example—a course which raises the question whether Richelieu himself was not strongly touched by the rationalism of his age. If it be true that the great Cardinal "believed as all the world did in his time,"<sup>3</sup> there is little more to be said; for unbelief, as we have seen, was already abundant, and even somewhat fashionable. Certainly no ecclesiastic in high power ever followed a less ecclesiastical policy;<sup>4</sup> and from the date of his appointment as Minister to Louis XIII (1624), for forty years, there was no burning of heretics or unbelievers in France. If he was orthodox, it was very passively.<sup>5</sup>

And Le Vayer's way of handling the dicta of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas as to the virtues of unbelievers being merely vices is for its time so hardy that the Cardinal's protection alone can explain its immunity from censure. St. Augustine and St. Thomas, says the critic calmly, had regard merely to eternal happiness, which virtue alone can obtain for no one. They are, therefore, to be always interpreted in this special sense. And so at the very outset the ground is summarily cleared of orthodox obstacles.<sup>6</sup> The *Petit discours chrétien sur l'immortalité de l'âme*, also addressed to Richelieu, tells of a good deal of current unbelief on that subject; and the epistle dedicatory professes pain over the "philosopher of our day [Vanini] who has had the impiety to write that, unless one is very old, very rich, and a German, one should never expatiate on this subject." But on the very threshold of the discourse, again, the skeptic tranquilly suggests that there would be "perhaps something unreasonable" in following Augustine's precept, so popular in later times, that the problem of immortality should be solved by the dictates of religion and feeling, not of "uncertain" reason. "Why," he asks, "should the soul be her own judge?"<sup>7</sup> And he shows a distinct appreciation of the avowal of Augustine in his *Retractationes* that his own book on the Immortality of the Soul was so obscure to him that in many places he himself could not understand it.<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> See the notices of him in Owen's *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*; and in Sainte-Beuve, *Port Royal*, iii, 180, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *De la Vertu des Payens*, in t. v. of the 12mo ed. of *Œuvres*, 1669.

<sup>3</sup> Hanotaux, *Hist. du Cardinal de Richelieu*, 1893, i, pref. p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Buckle, ch. viii, 1-vol. ed. pp. 305-10, 325-28.

<sup>5</sup> See the good criticism of M. Hanotaux in Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xvii. siècle*, p. 95 sq.

<sup>6</sup> *Œuvres*, ed. 1669, v, 4 sq. Bellarmine, as Le Vayer shows, had similarly explained away Augustine. But the doctrine that heathen virtue was not true virtue had remained orthodox.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. cited, iv, 125.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* pp. 123-24.



"Little Christian Discourse" is, in fact, not Christian at all; and its arguments are but dialectic exercises, on a par with those of the *Discours sceptique sur la musique* which follows. He was, in short, a skeptic by temperament; and his *Préface d'une histoire*<sup>1</sup> shows his mind to have played on the "Mississippi of falsehood called history" very much as did that of Bayle in a later generation.

Le Vayer's *Dialogues of Oratius Tubero* (1633) is philosophically his most important work;<sup>2</sup> but its tranquil Pyrrhonism was not calculated to affect greatly the current thought of his day; and he ranked rather as a man of all-round learning<sup>3</sup> than as a polemist, being reputed "a little contradictory, but in no way bigoted or obstinate, all opinions being to him nearly indifferent, excepting those of which faith does not permit us to doubt."<sup>4</sup> The last phrase tells of the fact that it affects to negate: Le Vayer's general skepticism was well known.<sup>5</sup> He was not indeed an original thinker, most of his ideas being echoes from the skeptics of antiquity;<sup>6</sup> and it has been not unjustly said of him that he is rather of the sixteenth century than of the seventeenth.<sup>7</sup>

2. On the other hand, the resort on the part of the Catholics to a skeptical method, as against both Protestants and freethinkers, which we have seen originating soon after the issue of Montaigne's *Essais*, seems to have become more and more common; and this process must rank as in some degree a product of skeptical thought of a more sincere sort. In any case it was turned vigorously, even recklessly, against the Protestants. Thus we find Daillé, at the outset of his work *On the True Use of the Fathers*,<sup>8</sup> complaining that when Protestants quote the Scriptures some Romanists at once ask "whence and in what way those books may be known to be really written by the prophets and apostles whose names and titles they bear." This challenge, rashly incurred by Luther and Calvin in their pronouncements on the Canon, later Protestants did not as a rule attempt to meet, save in the fashion of La Placette, who in his work *De insanibili Ecclesiæ Romanæ Scepticismo* (1688)<sup>9</sup> under-

<sup>1</sup> Tom. iii, 251.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote very many, the final collection filling three volumes folio, and fifteen in duodecimo. The *Cinq Dialogues faits à l'imitation des Anciens* were pseudonymous, and are not included in the collected works.

<sup>3</sup> "On le regarde comme le Plutarque de notre siècle" (Perrault, *Les Hommes Illustres du XVIIe Siècle*, éd. 1701, ii, 131).

<sup>4</sup> Perrault, ii, 132.

<sup>5</sup> Bayle, *Dict. art. LA MOTHE LE VAYER*. Cp. introd. to *L'Esprit de la Mothe le Vayer*, par M. de M. C. D. S. P. D. L. (i.e. De Montlinot, chanoine de Saint Pierre de Lille (1763, pp. xviii, xxi, xxvi).

<sup>6</sup> M. Perrens, who endorses this criticism, does not note that some passages he quotes from the *Dialogues*, as to atheism being less disturbing to States than superstition, are borrowed from Bacon's essay *Of Atheism*, of which Le Vayer would read the Latin version.

<sup>7</sup> Perrens, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> In French, 1631; in Latin, 1656, amended.

<sup>9</sup> Translated into English in 1688, and into French, under the title *Traité du Pyrrhonisme de l'église romaine*, by N. Chalaire, Amsterdam, 1721.

takes to show that Romanists themselves are without any grounds of certitude for the authority of the Church. It was indeed certain that the Catholic method would make more skeptics than it won.

3. Between the negative development of the doctrine of Montaigne and the vogue of upper-class deism, the philosophy of Descartes, with its careful profession of submission to the Church, had at first an easy reception; and on the appearance of the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) it speedily affected the whole thought of France; the women of the leisured class, now much given to literature, being among its students.<sup>1</sup> From the first the Jansenists, who were the most serious religious thinkers of the time, accepted the Cartesian system as in the main soundly Christian; and its founder's authority had some such influence in keeping up the prestige of orthodoxy as had that of Locke later in England. Boileau, who wrote a satire in defence of the system when it was persecuted after Descartes's death, is named among those whom he so influenced.<sup>2</sup> But a merely external influence of this kind could not counteract the fundamental rationalism of Descartes's thought, and the whole social and intellectual tendency towards a secular view of life. Soon, indeed, Descartes became suspect, partly by reason of the hostile activities of the Jesuits, who opposed him because the Jansenists generally held by him, though he had been a Jesuit pupil, and had always some adherents in that order;<sup>3</sup> partly by reason of the inherent naturalism of his system. That his doctrine was incompatible with the eucharist was the standing charge against it,<sup>4</sup> and his defence was not found satisfactory,<sup>5</sup> though his orthodox followers obtained from Queen Christina a declaration that he had been largely instrumental in converting her to Catholicism.<sup>6</sup> Pascal reproached him with having done his best to do without God in his system;<sup>7</sup> and this seems to have been the common clerical impression. Thirteen years after his death, in 1663, his work was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, under a modified censure,<sup>8</sup> and in 1671 a royal order was obtained under which his philosophy was proscribed in all the universities of France.<sup>9</sup> Cartesian professors and curés were persecuted and exiled, or

<sup>1</sup> Bouillier, *Hist. de la Philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 410 sq., 420 sq.; Lanson, *Hist de la litt. française*, 5e éd. p. 396; Brunetière, *Études Critiques*, 3e série, p. 2; Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 338. Bouillier notes (i, 426) that the *femmes savantes* ridiculed by Molière are Cartesians.

<sup>2</sup> Bouillier, i, 456; Lanson, p. 397.

<sup>3</sup> Bouillier, i, 411 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. 431 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Id. p. 437 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Id. pp. 449-50.

<sup>7</sup> "Il disait très souvent," said Pascal's niece:—"Je ne puis pardonner à Descartes: il aurait bien voulu, dans toute sa philosophie, pouvoir se passer de Dieu; mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de lui accorder une chiquenade, pour mettre le monde en mouvement; après cela il n'a plus que faire de Dieu." *Récit de Marguerite Perier* ("De ce que j'ai ouï dire par M. Pascal, mon oncle"), rep. with *Pensées*, ed. 1853, pp. 38-39.

<sup>8</sup> Bouillier, p. 453.

<sup>9</sup> Id. p. 455 sq.



compelled to recant; among the victims being Père Lami of the Congregation of the Oratory and Père André the Jesuit;<sup>1</sup> and the Oratorians were in 1678 forced to undergo the humiliation of not only renouncing Descartes and all his works, but of abjuring their former Cartesian declarations, in order to preserve their corporate existence.<sup>2</sup> Precisely in this period of official reaction, however, there was going on not merely an academic but a social development of a rationalistic kind, in which the persecuted philosophy played its part, even though some freethinkers disparaged it.

4. The general tendency is revealed on the one hand by the series of treatises from eminent Churchmen, defending the faith against unpublished attacks, and on the other hand by the prevailing tone in *belles lettres*. Malherbe, the literary dictator of the first quarter of the century, had died in 1628 with the character of a scoffer;<sup>3</sup> and the fashion now lasted till the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. In 1621, two years after the burning of Vanini, a young man named Jean Fontanier had been burned alive on the Place de Grève at Paris, apparently for the doctrines laid down by him in a manuscript entitled *Le Trésor Inestimable*, written on deistic and anti-Catholic lines.<sup>4</sup> He was said to have been successively Protestant, Catholic, Turk, Jew, and atheist; and had conducted himself like one of shaken mind.<sup>5</sup> But the cases of the poet Théophile de Viau, who about 1623 suffered prosecution on a charge of impiety,<sup>6</sup> and of his companions Berthelot and Colletet—who like him were condemned but set free by royal favour—appear to be the only others of the kind for over a generation. Frivolity of tone sufficed to ward off legal pursuit. It was in 1665, some years after the death of Mazarin, who had maintained Richelieu's policy of tolerance, that Claude Petit was burnt at Paris for "impious pieces";<sup>7</sup> and even then there was no general reversion to orthodoxy, the upper-class tone remaining, as in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, more or less unbelieving. When Corneille had introduced a touch of Christian zeal into his *Polyeucte* (1643) he had given general offence to the dilettants of both sexes.<sup>8</sup> Molière, again, the

<sup>1</sup> See Bouillier, i, 460 sq.; ii, 373 sq.; and introd. to *Œuvres philos. du Père Buffier*, 1846, p. 4; and cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de la civilisation française*, 6e éd. ii, 336.

<sup>2</sup> Bouillier, i, 465.

<sup>3</sup> Perrens, pp. 84-85.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Perrens, pp. 68-69, and refs.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 141.

<sup>6</sup> See Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i, and note 1; and Perrens, pp. 74-80.

<sup>7</sup> For all that is known of Petit see the Avertissement to Bibliophile Jacob's edition of *Paris ridicule et burlesque au 17ième siècle*, and refs. in Perrens, p. 153. After Petit's death, his friend Du Pelletier defended him as being a deist; but he seems in his youthful writings to have blasphemed at large, and he had been guilty of assassinating a young monk. He was burned, however, for blaspheming the Virgin.

<sup>8</sup> Guizot, *Corneille et son temps*, ed. 1880, p. 200. The circle of the Hôtel Rambouillet were especially hostile. Cp. Palissot's note to *Polyeucte*, end. On the other hand, Corneille found it prudent to cancel four skeptical lines which he had originally put in the mouth of the pagan Severus, the sage of the piece. Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 140.

disciple of Gassendi<sup>1</sup> and "the very genius of reason,"<sup>2</sup> was unquestionably an unbeliever;<sup>3</sup> and only the personal protection of Louis XIV, which after all could not avail to support such a play as *Tartufe* against the fury of the bigots, enabled him to sustain himself at all against them.

5. Equally freethinking was his brilliant predecessor and early comrade, CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1620-1655), who did not fear to indicate his frame of mind in one of his dramas. In *La Mort d'Agrippine* he puts in the mouth of Sejanus, as was said by a contemporary, "horrible things against the Gods," notably the phrase, "whom men made, and who did not make men,"<sup>4</sup> which, however, generally passed as an attack on polytheism; and though there was certainly no blasphemous intention in the phrase, *Frappons, voilà l'hostie* [= *hostia*, victim], some pretended to regard it as an insult to the Catholic *host*.<sup>5</sup> At times Cyrano writes like a deist;<sup>6</sup> but in so many other passages does he hold the language of a convinced materialist, and of a scoffer at that,<sup>7</sup> that he can hardly be taken seriously on the former head.<sup>8</sup> In short, he was one of the first of the hardy freethinkers who, under the tolerant rule of Richelieu and Mazarin, gave clear voice to the newer spirit. Under any other government, he would have been in danger of his life: as it was, he was menaced with prosecutions; his *Agrippine* was forbidden; the first edition of his *Pédant joué* was confiscated; during his last illness there was an attempt to seize his manuscripts; and down till the time of the Revolution the editions of his works were eagerly bought up and destroyed by zealots.<sup>9</sup> His recent literary rehabilitation thus hardly serves to realize his importance in the history of freethought. Between Cyrano and Molière it would appear that there was little less of rationalistic ferment in the France of their day than in England. Bossuet avows in a letter to Huet in 1678 that impiety and unbelief abound more than ever before.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Under whom he studied in his youth with a number of other notably independent spirits, among them Cyrano de Bergerac. See Sainte-Beuve's essay on Molière, prefixed to the Hachette edition. Molière held by Gassendias against Descartes. Bouillier, i, 542 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Constant Coquelin, art. "Don Juan" in the *International Review*, September, 1903, p. 61—an acute and scholarly study.

<sup>3</sup> "Molière is a freethinker to the marrow of his bones" (Perrens, p. 280). Cp. Lanson, p. 520; Fournier, *Études sur Molière*, 1885, pp. 122-23; Soury, *Brève de l'hist. du matér.* p. 384. "Ginguené," writes Sainte-Beuve, "a publié une brochure pour montrer Rabelais précurseur de la révolution française; c'étoit inutile à prouver sur Molière" (essay cited).

<sup>4</sup> Act II, sc. iv, in *Œuvres Comiques*, etc., ed. Jacob, rep. by Garnier, pp. 426-27.

<sup>5</sup> See Jacob's note in loc., ed. cited, p. 455.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. his *Lettre contre un Pédant* (No. 13 of the *Lettres Satiriques* in ed. cited, p. 181), which, however, appears to have been mutilated in some editions; as one of the deistic sentences cited by M. Perrens, p. 247, does not appear in the reprint of Bibliophile Jacob.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. the *Histoire des Oiseaux* in the *Histoire Comique des états et empires du Soleil*, ed. Jacob (Garnier), p. 278; and the *Fragment de Physique* (same vol.).

<sup>8</sup> See the careful criticism of Perrens, pp. 248-50.

<sup>9</sup> Bibliophile Jacob, pref. to ed. cited, pp. i-ii.

<sup>10</sup> Perrens, p. 302. Compare Bossuet's earlier sermon for the Second Sunday of Advent,



6. Even in the apologetic reasoning of the greatest French prose writer of that age, Pascal, we have the most pregnant testimony to the prevalence of unbelief; for not only were the fragments preserved as *Pensées* (1670), however originated,<sup>1</sup> developed as part of a planned defence of religion against contemporary rationalism,<sup>2</sup> but they themselves show their author profoundly unable to believe save by a desperate abnegation of reason, though he perpetually commits the gross fallacy of trusting to reason to prove that reason is untrustworthy. His work is thus one continuous paralogism, in which reason is disparaged merely to make way for a parade of bad reasoning. The case of Pascal is that of Berkeley with a difference: the latter suffered from hypochondria, but reacted with nervous energy; Pascal, a physical degenerate, prematurely profound, was prematurely old; and his pietism in its final form is the expression of the physical collapse.

This is disputed by M. Lanson, an always weighty authority. He writes (p. 464) that Pascal was "neither mad nor ill" when he gave himself up wholly to religion. But ill he certainly was. He had *chronically* suffered from intense pains in the head from his eighteenth year; and M. Lanson admits (p. 451) that the *Pensées* were written in intervals of acute suffering. This indeed understates the case. Pascal several times told his family that since the age of eighteen he had never passed a day without pain. His sister, Madame Perier, in her biographical sketch, speaks of him as suffering "continual and ever-increasing maladies," and avows that the four last years of his life, in which he penned the fragments called *Pensées*, "were but a continual languishment." The Port Royal preface of 1670 says the same thing, speaking of the "four years of languor and malady in which he wrote all we have of the book he planned," and calling the *Pensées* "the feeble essays of a sick man." Cp. Pascal's *Prière pour demander à Dieu le bon usage des maladies*; and Owen *French Skeptics*, pp. 746, 784.

Doubtless the levity and licence of the *libertins* in high places<sup>3</sup> confirmed him in his revolt against unbelief; but his own credence was an act rather of despairing emotion than of rational conviction. The man who advised doubters to make a habit of causing masses to be said and following religious rites, on the score that *cela vous*

1665, cited by Perrens, pp. 253-54, where he speaks with something like fury of the free discussion around him.

<sup>1</sup> Cousin plausibly argues that Pascal began writing *Pensées* under the influence of a practice set up in her circle by Madame de Sablé. *Mme. de Sablé*, 5<sup>e</sup> édit. p. 124 sq.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be remembered that the work as published contained matter not Pascal's. Cp. Brunetière, *Études*, iii, 46-47; and the editions of the *Pensées* by Faugère and Havet.

<sup>3</sup> As to some of these see Perrens, pp. 158-69. They included the great Condé and some of the women in his circle; all of them unserious in their skepticism, and all "converted" when the physique gave the required cue.

*fera croire et vous abêtira*—"that will make you believe and will stupefy you"<sup>1</sup>—was a pathological case; and though the whole Jansenist movement latterly stood for a reaction against free-thinking, it can hardly be doubted that the *Pensées* generally acted as a solvent rather than as a sustainer of religious beliefs.<sup>2</sup> This charge was made against them immediately on their publication by the Abbé de Villars, who pointed out that they did the reverse of what they claimed to do in the matter of appealing to the heart and to good sense, since they set forth all the ordinary arguments of Pyrrhonism, denied that the existence of God could be established by reason or philosophy, and staked the case on a "wager" which shocked good sense and feeling alike. "Have you resolved," asks this critic in dialogue, "to make atheists on pretext of combatting them?"<sup>3</sup>

The same question arises concerning the famous *Lettres Provinciales* (1656), written by Pascal in defence of Arnauld against the persecution of the Jesuits, who carried on in Arnauld's case their campaign against Jansen, whom they charged with mis-stating the doctrine of Augustine in his great work expounding that Father. Once more the Catholic Church was swerving from its own established doctrine of predestination, the Spanish Jesuit Molina having set up a new movement in the Pelagian or Arminian direction. The cause of the Jansenists has been represented as that of freedom of thought and speech;<sup>4</sup> and this it relatively was insofar as Jansen and Arnauld sought for a hearing, while the Jesuit-ridden Sorbonne strove to silence and punish them. Pascal had to go from printer to printer as his Letters succeeded each other, the first three being successively prosecuted by the clerical authorities; and in their collected form they found publicity only by being printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam, with the rubric of Cologne. All the while Jansenism claimed to be strict orthodoxy; and it was in virtue only of the irreducible element of rationalism in Pascal that the school of Port Royal made for freethought in any higher or more general sense. Indeed, between his own reputation for piety and that of the Jansenists for orthodoxy, the *Provincial Letters* have a conventional standing as orthodox compositions. It is strange, however, that those who charge upon the satire of the later philosophers the downfall of Catholicism in France should

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées*, ed. Faugère, ii, 168-69. The "abêtira" comes from Montaigne.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Mr. Owen treats Pascal as a skeptic, which philosophically he was, insofar as he really philosophized and did not merely catch at pleas for his emotional beliefs. "Les *Pensées* de Pascal," writes Prof. Le Dantec, "sont à mon avis le livre le plus capable de renforcer l'athéisme chez un athée" (*L'Athéisme*, 1906, pp. 24-25). They have in fact always had that effect.

<sup>3</sup> *De la Delicatesse*, 1671, dial. v, p. 329, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Vinet, *Études sur Blaise Pascal*, 3<sup>e</sup> édit. p. 267 sq.



not realize the plain tendency of these brilliant satires to discredit the entire authority of the Church, and, further, by their own dogmatic weaknesses, to put all dogma alike under suspicion.<sup>1</sup> Few thoughtful men can now read the *Provinciales* without being impressed by the utter absurdity of the problem over which the entire religious intelligence of a great nation was engrossed.

It was, in fact, the endless wrangles of the religious factions over unintelligible issues that more than any other single cause fostered the unbelief previously set up by religious wars;<sup>2</sup> and Pascal's writings only deepened the trouble. Even Bossuet, in his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* (1688), did but throw a new light on the hollowness of the grounds of religion; and for thoughtful readers gave a lead rather to atheism than to Catholicism. The converts it would make to the Catholic Church would be precisely those whose adherence was of least value, since they had not even the temperamental basis which, rather than argument, kept Bossuet a believer, and were Catholics only for lack of courage to put all religion aside. When "variation" was put as a sign of error by a Churchman the bulk of whose life was spent in bitter strifes with sections of his own Church, critical people were hardly likely to be confirmed in the faith. Within ten years of writing his book against the Protestants, Bossuet was engaged in an acrid controversy with Fénelon, his fellow prelate and fellow demonstrator of the existence and attributes of God, accusing him of holding unchristian positions; and both prelates were always fighting their fellow-churchmen the Jansenists. If the variations of Protestants helped Catholicism, those of Catholics must have helped unbelief.

7. A similar fatality attended the labours of the learned Huet, Bishop of Avranches, whose *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1678) is remarkable (with Boyle's *Discourse of Things above Reason*) as anticipating Berkeley in the argument from the arbitrariness of mathematical assumptions. He too, by that and by his later works, made for sheer philosophical skepticism,<sup>3</sup> always a dangerous basis for orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> Such an evolution, on the part of a man of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the *Éloge de Pascal* by Bordas Demoulin in Didot ed. of the *Lettres*, 1854, pp. xxii-xxiii, and cit. from Saint-Beuve. Mark Pattison, it seems, held that the Jesuits had the best of the argument. See the *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone*, 1904, p. 207. As regards the effect of Jansenism on belief, we find De Tocqueville pronouncing that "Le Jansenisme ouvrit.....la brèche par laquelle la philosophie du 18e siècle devait faire irruption" (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 2). This could truly be said of Pascal.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Voltaire's letter of 1768, cited by Morley, *Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Owen, *French Skeptics*, pp. 762-63, 767.

<sup>4</sup> This was expressly urged against Huet by Arnauld. See the *Notice* in Jourdain's ed. of the *Logique de Port Royal*, 1854, p. xi; Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 301; and Bouillier *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 595-96, where are cited the letters of Arnauld (Nos.

uncommon intellectual energy, challenges attention, the more so seeing that it typifies a good deal of thinking within the Catholic pale, on lines already noted as following on the debate with Protestantism. Honestly pious by bent of mind, but always occupied with processes of reasoning and research, Huet leant more and more, as he grew in years, to the skeptical defence against the pressures of Protestantism and rationalism, at once following and furthering the tendency of his age. That the skeptical method is a last weapon of defence can be seen from the temper in which the demonstrator assails Spinoza, whom he abuses, without naming him, in the fashion of his day, and to whose arguments concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch he makes singularly feeble answers.<sup>1</sup> They are too worthless to have satisfied himself; and it is easy to see how he was driven to seek a more plausible rebuttal.<sup>2</sup> A distinguished English critic, noting the general movement, pronounces, justly enough, that Huet took up philosophy "not as an end, but as a means—not for its own sake, but for the support of religion"; and then adds that his attitude is thus quite different from Pascal's.<sup>3</sup> But the two cases are really on a level. Pascal too was driven to philosophy in reaction against incredulity; and though Pascal's work is of a more bitter and morbid intensity, Huet also had in him that psychic craving for a supernatural support which is the essence of latter-day religion. And if we credit this spirit to Pascal and to Huet, as we do to Newman, we must suppose that it partly touched the whole movement of pro-Catholic skepticism which has been above noted as following on the Reformation. It is ascribing to it as a whole too much of calculation and strategy to say of its combatants that "they conceived the desperate design of first ruining the territory they were prepared to evacuate; before philosophy was handed over to the philosophers the old Aristotelean citadel was to be blown into the air."<sup>4</sup> In reality they caught, as religious men will, with passion rather than with policy, at any plea that might seem fitted to beat down the presumption of "the wild, living intellect of man";<sup>5</sup> and their skepticism had a certain sincerity inasmuch as, trained to uncritical belief, they had never found for themselves the grounds of rational certitude.

830, 834, and 837 in *Cœuvres Compl.* iii, 396, 404, 424) denouncing Huet's Pyrrhonism as "impious" and perfectly adapted to the purposes of the freethinkers.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, i (1888), pp. 64-68.

<sup>2</sup> Huet himself incurred a charge of temerity in his handling of textual questions. *Id.* p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Pattison, *Essays*, 1889, i, 303-304.

<sup>4</sup> Pattison, as cited.

<sup>5</sup> "After all, a book [the Bible] cannot make a stand against the wild, living intellect of man." Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1st ed. p. 382; ed. 1875, p. 245. The same is said by Newman of religion in general (p. 243).



Inasmuch too as Protestantism had no such ground, and rationalism was still far from having cleared its bases, Huet, as things went, was within his moral rights when he set forth his transcendentalist skepticism in his *Quæstiones Alnetanæ* in 1690. Though written in very limpid Latin,<sup>1</sup> that work attracted practically no attention; and though, having a repute for provincialism in his French style, Huet was loth to resort to the vernacular, he did devote his spare hours through a number of his latter years to preparing his *Traité Philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain*, which, dying in 1722, he left to be published posthumously (1723). The outcry against his criticism of Descartes and his *Demonstratio* had indisposed him for further personal strife; but he was determined to leave a completed message. Thus it came about that a sincere and devoted Catholic bishop "left, as his last legacy to his fellow-men, a work of the most outrageous skepticism."<sup>2</sup>

8. Meanwhile the philosophy of Descartes, if less strictly propitious to science at some points than that of Gassendi, was both directly and indirectly making for the activity of reason. In virtue of its formal "spiritualism," it found access where any clearly materialistic doctrine would have been tabooed; so that we find the Cartesian ecclesiastic Régis not only eagerly listened to and acclaimed at Toulouse in 1665, but offered a civic pension by the magistrates<sup>3</sup>—this within two years of the placing of Descartes's works on the *Index*. After arousing a similar enthusiasm at Montpellier and at Paris, Régis was silenced by the Archbishop, whereupon he set himself to develop the Cartesian philosophy in his study. The result was that he ultimately went beyond his master, openly rejecting the idea of creation out of nothing,<sup>4</sup> and finally following Locke in rejecting the innate ideas which Descartes had affirmed.<sup>5</sup> Another young Churchman, Desgabets, developing from Descartes and his pupil Malebranche, combined with their "spiritist" doctrine much of the virtual materialism of Gassendi, arriving at a kind of pantheism, and at a courageous pantheistic ethic, wherein God is recognized as the author alike of good and evil<sup>6</sup>—a doctrine which we find even getting a hearing in general society, and noticed in the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné in 1677.<sup>7</sup>

Malebranche's treatise *De la Recherche de la Vérité* (1674) was

<sup>1</sup> Pattison disparages it as colourless, a fault he charges on Jesuit Latin in general. But by most moderne the Latin style of Huet will be found pure and pleasant.

<sup>2</sup> Pattison, *Essays*, i, 299. Cp. Bouillier, i, 595.

<sup>3</sup> Fontenelle, *Éloge sur Régis*; Bouillier, *Philos. cartés.* i, 507.

<sup>4</sup> *Réponse to Huet's Censura philosophica cartes.* 1691; Bouillier, i, 515.

<sup>5</sup> *Usage de la raison et de la foi*, 1704, liv. i, ptie. i, ch. vii; Bouillier, p. 511.

<sup>6</sup> Bouillier, i, 521-25.

<sup>7</sup> Lettre de 10 août, 1677, No. 591, éd. Nodier.

in fact a development of Descartes which on the one hand sought to connect his doctrine of innate ideas with his God-idea, and on the other hand headed the whole system towards pantheism. The tendency had arisen before him in the congregation of the Oratory, to which he belonged, and in which the Cartesian philosophy had so spread that when, in 1678, the alarmed superiors proposed to eradicate it, they were told by the members that, "If Cartesianism is a plague, there are two hundred of us who are infected."<sup>1</sup> But if Cartesianism alarmed the official orthodox, Malebranche wrought a deeper disintegration of the faith. In his old age his young disciple De Mairan, who had deeply studied Spinoza, pressed him fatally hard on the virtual coincidence of his philosophy with that of the more thorough-going pantheist; and Malebranche indignantly repudiated all agreement with "the miserable Spinoza,"<sup>2</sup> "the atheist,"<sup>3</sup> whose system he pronounced "a frightful and ridiculous chimera."<sup>4</sup> "Nevertheless, it was towards this chimera that Malebranche tended."<sup>5</sup> On all hands the new development set up new strife; and Malebranche, who disliked controversy, found himself embroiled alike with Jansenists and Jesuits, with orthodox and with innovating Cartesians, and with his own Spinozistic disciples. The Jansenist Arnauld attacked his book in a long and stringent treatise, *Des vraies et des fausses idées* (1683),<sup>6</sup> accumulating denials and contradictions with a cold tenacity of ratiocination which never lapsed into passion, and was all the more destructive. For the Jansenists Malebranche was a danger to the faith in the ratio of his exaltation of it, inasmuch as reference of the most ordinary beliefs back to "faith" left them no ground upon which to argue up to faith.<sup>7</sup> This seems to have been a common feeling among his readers. For the same reason he made no appeal to men of science. He would have no recognition of secondary causes, the acceptance of which he declared to be a dangerous relapse into paganism.<sup>8</sup> There was thus no scientific principle in the new doctrine which could enable it to solve the problems or absorb the systems of other schools. Locke was as little moved by it as were the Jansenists. Malebranche won readers everywhere by his

<sup>1</sup> Bouillier, ii, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Méditations chrétiennes*, ix, § 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Entretiens métaphysiques*, viii.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* viii, ix.

<sup>5</sup> Bouillier, ii, 33. So Kuno Fischer: "In brief, Malebranche's doctrine, rightly understood, is Spinoza's" (*Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 589. Cp. p. 542).

<sup>6</sup> The work of Arnauld was reprinted in 1724 with a remarkable *Approbation* by Clavel, in which he eulogizes the style and the dialectic of Arnauld, and expresses the hope that the book may "guérir, s'il se peut, d'une étrange préoccupation et d'une excessive confiance, ceux qui enseignent ou soutiennent comme évident ce qu'il y a de plus dangereux dans la nouvelle philosophie non-obstant les défenses faites par le feu Roi Louis XIV à l'Université d'Angers en l'année 1675 et à l'Université de Paris aux années 1691 et 1704 de le laisser enseigner ou soutenir."

<sup>7</sup> *Des vraies et des fausses idées*, ch. xxviii.

<sup>8</sup> *Recherche de la Vérité*, liv. vi, ptie ii, ch. iii.



charm of style;<sup>1</sup> but he was as much of a disturber as of a reconciler. The very controversies which he set up made for disintegration; and Fénelon found it necessary to "refute" Malebranche as well as Spinoza, and did his censure with as great severity as Arnauld's.<sup>2</sup> The mere fact that Malebranche put aside miracles in the name of divine law was fatal from the point of view of orthodoxy.

9. Yet another philosophic figure of the reign of Louis XIV, the Jesuit Père Buffier (1661-1737), deserves a passing notice here—out of his chronological order—though the historians of philosophy have mostly ignored him.<sup>3</sup> He is indeed of no permanent philosophic importance, being a precursor of the Scottish school of Reid, nourished on Locke, and somewhat on Descartes; but he is significant for the element of practical rationalism which pervades his reasoning, and which recommended him to Voltaire, Reid, and Destutt de Tracy. On the question of "primary truths in theology" he declares so boldly for the authority of revelation in all dogmas which pass comprehension, and for the non-concern of theology with any process of rational proof,<sup>4</sup> that it is hardly possible to suppose him a believer. On those principles, Islam has exactly the same authority as Christianity. In his metaphysic "he rejects all the ontological proofs of the existence of God, and, among others, the proof of Descartes from infinitude: he maintains that the idea of God is not innate, and that it can be reached only from consideration of the order of nature."<sup>5</sup> He is thus as much of a force for deism as was his master, Locke; and he outgoes him in point of rationalism when he puts the primary ethic of reciprocity as a universally recognized truth,<sup>6</sup> where Locke had helplessly fallen back on "the will of God." On the other hand he censures Descartes for not admitting the equal validity of other tests with that of primary consciousness, thus in effect putting himself in line with Gassendi. For the rest, his *Examen des préjugés vulgaires*, the most popular of his works, is so full of practical rationalism, and declares among other things so strongly in favour of free discussion, that its influence must have been wholly in the direction of free-thought. "Give me," he makes one of his disputants say, "a nation where they do not dispute, do not contest: it will be, I assure

<sup>1</sup> This was the main theme of the finished *Éloge* of Fontenelle, and was acknowledged by Bayle, Daguesseau, Arnauld, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Diderot, none of whom agreed with him. Bouillier, ii, 19. Fontenelle opposed Malebranche's philosophy in his *Doutes sur le système physique des causes occasionnelles*. Id. p. 575. <sup>2</sup> Cp. Bouillier, ii, 260-61.

<sup>3</sup> He is not mentioned by Ueberweg, Lange, or Lewes. His importance in aesthetics, however, is recognized by some moderns, though he is not named in Mr. Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetics*. <sup>4</sup> *Traité des premières vérités*, 1724, §§ 521-31.

<sup>5</sup> Bouillier, introd. to Buffier's *Œuvres philosophiques*, 1846, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> *Remarques sur les principes de la métaphysique de Locke*, passages cited by Bouillier.

you, a very stupid and a very ignorant nation."<sup>1</sup> Such reasoning could hardly please the Jesuits,<sup>2</sup> and must have pleased freethinkers. And yet Buffier, like Gassendi, in virtue of his clerical status and his purely professional orthodoxy, escaped all persecution.

While an evolving Cartesianism, modified by the thought of Locke and the critical evolution of that, was thus reacting on thought in all directions, the primary and proper impulse of Descartes and Locke was doing on the Continent what that of Bacon had already done in England—setting men on actual scientific observation and experiment, and turning them from traditionalism of every kind. The more religious minds, as Malebranche, set their faces almost fanatically against erudition, thus making an enemy of the all-learned Huet,<sup>3</sup> but on the other hand preparing the way for the scientific age. For the rest we find the influence of Descartes at work in heresies at which he had not hinted. Finally we shall see it taking deep root in Holland, furthering a rationalistic view of the Bible and of popular superstitions.

10. Yet another new departure was made in the France of Louis XIV by the scholarly performance of RICHARD SIMON (1638-1712), who was as regards the Scriptural texts what Spencer of Cambridge was as regards the culture-history of the Hebrews, one of the founders of modern methodical criticism. It was as a devout Catholic refuting Protestants, and a champion of the Bible against Spinoza, that Simon began his work; but, more sincerely critical than Huet, he reached views more akin to those of Spinoza than to those of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The congregation of the Oratory, where Simon laid the foundations of his learning, was so little inclined to his critical views that he decided to leave it; and though persuaded to stay, and to become for a time a professor of philosophy at Julli, he at length broke with the Order. Then, from his native town of Dieppe, came his strenuous series of critical works—*L'histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678), which among other things decisively impugned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; the *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (Rotterdam, 1689); numerous other volumes of critical studies on texts, versions, and commentators; and finally a French translation of the New Testament with notes. His *Bibliothèque Critique* (4 vols. under the name of Saint-Jore) was suppressed by an order in council; the translation was condemned by Bossuet and the Archbishop of Paris;

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres*, éd. Bouillier, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.* ii, 391.

<sup>3</sup> Malebranche, *Traité de Morale*, liv. ii, ch. 10. Cp. Bouillier, i, 582, 588-90; ii, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 67 sq.



and the two first-named works were suppressed by the Parlement of Paris and attacked by a host of orthodox scholars; but they were translated promptly into Latin and English; and they gave a new breadth of footing to the deistic argument, though Simon always wrote as an avowed believer.

Before Simon, the Protestant Isaac la Peyrère, the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Gassendi, and the librarian of Condé, had fired a somewhat startling shot at the Pentateuch in his *Præadamitæ*<sup>1</sup> and *Systema Theologica ex Præadamitarum Hypothesi* (both 1655: printed in Holland<sup>2</sup>), for which he was imprisoned at Brussels, with the result that he recanted and joined the Church of Rome, going to the Pope in person to receive absolution, and publishing an *Epistola ad Philotimum* (Frankfort, 1658), in which he professed to explain his reasons for abjuring at once his Calvinism and his treatise. It is clear that all this was done to save his skin, for there is explicit testimony that he held firmly by his Preadamite doctrine to the end of his life, despite the seven or eight confutations of his work published in 1656.<sup>3</sup> Were it not for his constructive theses—especially his idea that Adam was a real person, but simply the father of the Hebrews and not of the human race—he would deserve to rank high among the scientific pioneers of modern rationalism, for his negative work is shrewd and sound. Like so many other early rationalists, collectively accused of “destroying without replacing,” he erred precisely in his eagerness to build up, for his negations have all become accepted truths.<sup>4</sup> As it is, he may be ranked, after Toland, as a main founder of the older rationalism, developed chiefly in Germany, which sought to reduce as many miracles as possible to natural events misunderstood. But he was too far before his time to win a fair hearing. Where Simon laid a cautious scholarly foundation, Peyrère suddenly challenged immemorial beliefs, and failed accordingly.

11. Such an evolution could not occur in France without affecting the neighbouring civilization of Holland. We have seen Dutch life

<sup>1</sup> *Præadamitæ, sive Exercitatio super versibus 12, 13, 14 cap. 5, Epist. D. Pauli ad Romanos, Quibus inducuntur Primi Homines ante Adamum conditi*. The notion of a pre-Adamite human race, as we saw, had been held by Bruno. (Above, p. 46.)

<sup>2</sup> My copies of the *Præadamitæ* and *Systema* bear no place-imprint, but simply “Anno Salutis MDCLV.” Both books seem to have been at once reprinted in 12mo.

<sup>3</sup> Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. PEYRERE. A correspondent of Bayle's concludes his account of “le Præadamite” thus: “Le Pereire étoit le meilleur homme du monde, le plus doux, et qui tranquillement croyoit fort peu de chose.” There is a satirical account of him in the *Lettres de Gué Patin*, April 5, 1658 (No. 454, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii, 83), cited by Bayle.

<sup>4</sup> See the account of his book by Mr. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 295-97. Rejecting as he did the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he ranks with Hobbes and Spinoza among the pioneers of true criticism. Indeed, as his book seems to have been in MS. in 1645, he may precede Hobbes. Patin had heard of Peyrère's *Præadamitæ* as ready for printing in 1643. Let. 169, ed. cited, i, 297.

at the beginning of the seventeenth century full of Protestant fanaticism and sectarian strife; and in the time of Descartes these elements, especially on the Calvinist side, were strong enough virtually to drive him out of Holland (1647) after nineteen years' residence.<sup>1</sup> He had, however, made disciples; and his doctrine bore fruit, finding doubtless some old soil ready. Thus in 1666 one of his disciples, the Amsterdam physician Louis Meyer, published a work entitled *Philosophia Sacrae Scripturae Interpres*,<sup>2</sup> in which, after formally affirming that the Scripture is the infallible Word of God, he proceeds to argue that the interpretation of the Word must be made by the human reason, and accordingly sets aside all meanings which are irreconcilable therewith, reducing them to allegories or tropes. Apart from this, there is somewhat strong evidence that in Holland in the second half of the century Cartesianism was in large part identified with a widespread movement of rationalism, of a sufficiently pronounced kind. Peter von Mastricht, Professor of Theology at Utrecht, published in 1677 a Latin treatise, *Novitatum Cartesianarum Gangræna*, in which he made out a list of fifty-six anti-Christian propositions maintained by Cartesians. Among them are these: That the divine essence, also that of angels, and that of the soul, consists only in Cogitation; That philosophy is not subservient to divinity, and is no less certain and no less revealed; That in things natural, moral, and practical, and also in matters of faith, the Scripture speaks according to the erroneous notions of the vulgar; That the mystery of the Trinity may be demonstrated by natural reason; That the first chaos was able of itself to produce all things material; That the world has a soul; and that it may be infinite in extent.<sup>3</sup> The theologian was thus visibly justified in maintaining that the “novelties” of Cartesianism outwent by a long way those of Arminianism.<sup>4</sup> It had in fact established a new point of view; seeing that Arminius had claimed for theology all the supremacy ever accorded to it in the Church.<sup>5</sup>

12. As Meyer was one of the most intimate friends of Spinoza, being with him at death, and became the editor of his posthumous works, it can hardly be doubted that his treatise, which preceded Spinoza's *Tractatus* by four years, influenced the great Jew, who speedily eclipsed him.<sup>6</sup> SPINOZA, however (1632-1677), was first led

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 254-68.

<sup>2</sup> Colerus (i.e., Köhler), *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, pp. xlv-xlvii.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by George Sinclair in pref. to *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 1685, rep. 1871. I have been unable to meet with a copy of Mastricht's book.

<sup>4</sup> “Novitates Cartesianæ multis parasangas superant Arminianas.”

<sup>5</sup> Nichols, *Works of Arminius*, 1824, i, 257 b (paging partly duplicated).

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Bouillier, i, 293-94.



to rationalize by his Amsterdam friend and teacher, Van den Ende, a scientific materialist, hostile to all religion;<sup>1</sup> and it was while under his influence that he was excommunicated by his father's synagogue. From the first, apparently, Spinoza's thought was shaped partly by the medieval Hebrew philosophy<sup>2</sup> (which, as we have seen, combined Aristotelean and Saracen influences), partly by the teaching of Bruno, though he modified and corrected that at various points.<sup>3</sup> Later he was deeply influenced by Descartes, whom he specially expounded for a pupil in a tractate.<sup>4</sup> Here he endorses Descartes's doctrine of freewill, which he was later to repudiate and overthrow. But he drew from Descartes his retained principle that evil is not a real existence. In a much less degree he was influenced by Bacon, whose psychology he ultimately condemned; but from Hobbes he took not only his rationalistic attitude towards "revelation," but his doctrine of ecclesiastical subordination.<sup>5</sup> Finally evolving his own conceptions, he produced a philosophic system which was destined to affect all European thought, remaining the while quietly occupied with the handicraft of lens-grinding by which he earned his livelihood. The Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, John de Witt, seems to have been in full sympathy with the young heretic, on whom he conferred a small pension before he had published anything save his Cartesian *Principia* (1663).

The much more daring and powerful *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670<sup>6</sup>) was promptly condemned by a Dutch clerical synod, along with Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which it greatly surpassed in the matter of criticism of the scriptural text. It was the most stringent censure of supernaturalism that had thus far appeared in any modern language; and its preface is an even more mordant attack on popular religion and clericalism than the main body of the work. What seems to-day an odd compromise—the reservation of supra-rational authority for revelation, alongside of unqualified claims for the freedom of reason<sup>7</sup>—was but an adaptation of the old scholastic formula of "twofold truth," and was perhaps at the time the possible maximum of open rationalism in regard to the current creed, since both Bacon and Locke, as we have seen, were fain to resort to it. As revealed in his letters, Spinoza in almost all things stood at

<sup>1</sup> Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of *Opera*, p. xxv; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, 1882, pp. 20-22; Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. 1899, pp. 10-14.

<sup>2</sup> As set forth by Joel, *Beiträge zur Gesch. der Philos.*, Breslau, 1876. See citations in Land's note to his lecture in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1892, pp. 51-53.

<sup>3</sup> Land, "In Memory of Spinoza," in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, pp. 57-58; Sigwart, as there cited; Pollock, *Spinoza*, p. 12. Cp. however, Martineau, p. 101, note.

<sup>4</sup> *Renati Des Cartes Princip. Philos. more geometrico demonstrata*, 1663.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Martineau, pp. 46, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted in 1674, without place-name, and with the imprint of an imaginary Hamburg publisher.

<sup>7</sup> *Tractatus*, c. 15.

the point of view of the cultivated rationalism of two centuries later. He believed in a historical Jesus, rejecting the Resurrection;<sup>1</sup> disbelieved in ghosts and spirits;<sup>2</sup> rejected miracles;<sup>3</sup> and refused to think of God as ever angry;<sup>4</sup> avowing that he could not understand the Scriptures, and had been able to learn nothing from them as to God's attributes.<sup>5</sup> The *Tractatus* could not go so far; but it went far enough to horrify many who counted themselves latitudinarian. It was only in Holland that so aggressive a criticism of Christian faith and practice could then appear; and even there neither publisher nor author dared avow himself. Spinoza even vetoed a translation into Dutch, foreseeing that such a book would be placed under an interdict.<sup>6</sup> It was as much an appeal for freedom of thought (*libertas philosophandi*) as a demonstration of rational truth; and Spinoza dexterously pointed (c. 20) to the social effects of the religious liberty already enjoyed in Amsterdam as a reason for carrying liberty further. There can be no question that it powerfully furthered alike the deistic and the Unitarian movements in England from the year of its appearance; and, though the States-General felt bound formally to prohibit it on the issue of the second edition in 1674, its effect in Holland was probably as great as elsewhere: at least there seems to have gone on there from this time a rapid modification of the old orthodoxy.

Still more profound, probably, was the effect of the posthumous *Ethica* (1677), which he had been prevented from publishing in his lifetime,<sup>7</sup> and which not only propounded in parts an absolute pantheism (=atheism<sup>8</sup>), but definitely grounded ethics in human nature. If more were needed to arouse theological rage, it was to be found in the repeated and insistent criticism of the moral and mental perversity of the defenders of the faith<sup>9</sup>—a position not indeed quite consistent with the primary teaching of the treatise on the subject of Will, of which it denies the entity in the ordinary sense. Spinoza was here reverting to the practical attitude of Bacon, which, under a partial misconception, he had repudiated; and he did not formally solve the contradiction. His purpose was to confute the ordinary orthodox dogma that unbelief is wilful sin;

<sup>1</sup> Ep. xxiv, to Oldenburg.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. xxiii, to Oldenburg.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. xxiv, to W. van Bleyenbergh.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. xlvii, to Jellis, Feb. 1671.

<sup>5</sup> "Spinozism is atheistic, and has no valid ground for retaining the word 'God'" (Martineau, p. 349). This estimate is systematically made good by Prof. E. E. Powell of Miami University in his *Spinoza and Religion* (1906). See in particular ch. v. The summing-up is that "the right name for Spinoza's philosophy is Atheistic Monism" (pp. 339-40).

<sup>6</sup> *Ethica*, pt. i, App.; pt. ii, end; pt. v, prop. 41, schol. Cp. the Letters, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> Epp. lviii, lx, to Boxel.

<sup>8</sup> Ep. xxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Ep. xix, 1675, to Oldenburg.



and to retort the charge without reconciling it with the thesis was to impair the philosophic argument.<sup>1</sup> It was not on that score, however, that it was resented, but as an unpardonable attack on orthodoxy, not to be atoned for by any words about the spirit of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The discussion went deep and far. A reply to the *Tractatus* which appeared in 1674, by an Utrecht professor (then dead), is spoken of by Spinoza with contempt;<sup>3</sup> but abler discussion followed, though the assailants mostly fell foul of each other. Franz Cuper or Kuyper of Amsterdam, who in 1676 published an *Arcana Atheismi Revelata*, professedly refuting Spinoza's *Tractatus*, was charged with writing in bad faith and with being on Spinoza's side—an accusation which he promptly retorted on other critics, apparently with justice.<sup>4</sup>

The able treatise of Prof. E. E. Powell on *Spinoza and Religion* is open to demur at one point—its reiterated dictum that Spinoza's character was marred by "lack of moral courage" (p. 44). This expression is later in a measure retreated from: after "his habitual attitude of timid caution," we have: "Spinoza's timidity, or, if you will, his peaceable disposition." If the last-cited concession is to stand, the other phrases should be withdrawn. Moral courage, like every other human attribute, is to be estimated comparatively; and the test-question here is: Did any other writer in Spinoza's day venture further than he? Moral courage is not identical with the fanaticism which invites destruction; fanaticism supplies a motive which dispenses with courage, though it operates as courage might. But refusal to challenge destruction gratuitously does not imply lack of courage, though of course it may be thereby motivated. A quite brave man, it has been noted, will quietly shun a gratuitous risk where one who is "afraid of being afraid" may face it. When all is said, Spinoza was one of the most daring writers of his day; and his ethic made it no more a dereliction of duty for him to avoid provoking arrest and capital punishment than it is for either a Protestant or a rationalist to refrain from courting death by openly defying Catholic beliefs before a Catholic mob in Spain. It is easy for any of us to-day to be far more explicit than Spinoza was. It is doubtful whether any of us, if we had lived in his day and were capable of going as far in heresy, would

<sup>1</sup> The solution is, of course, that the attitude of the will in the forming of opinion may or may not be passionately perverse, in the sense of being inconsistent. To show that it is inconsistent may be a means of enlightening it; and an aspersion to that effect may be medicinal. Spinoza might truly have said that passionate perversity was at least as common on the orthodox side as on the other. In any case, he quashes his own criticism of Bacon. Cp. the author's essay on Spinoza in *Pioneer Humanists*.

<sup>2</sup> Pt. iv, prop. 68, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 1; 2 June, 1674.

<sup>4</sup> Colerus, as cited, p. liv. Cuper appears to have been genuinely anti-Spinozist, while his opponent, Breitburg, or Bredenburg, of Rotterdam, was a Spinozist. Both were members of the society of "Collegiants," a body of non-dogmatic Christians, which for a time was broken up through their dissensions. Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. vii, § 2, and note.

have run such risks as he did in publishing the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. For those who have lived much in his society, it should be difficult to doubt that, if allowed, he would have dared death on the night of the mob-murder of the De Witts. The formerly suppressed proof of his very plain speaking on the subject of prayer, and his indications of aversion to the practice of grace before meals (Powell, pp. 323-25) show lack even of prudence on his part. Prof. Powell is certainly entitled to censure those recent writers who have wilfully kept up a mystification as to Spinoza's religiosity; but *their* lack of courage or candour does not justify an imputation of the same kind upon him. That Spinoza was "no saint" (Powell, p. 43) is true in the remote sense that he was not incapable of anger. But it would be hard to find a Christian who would compare with him in general nobility of character. The proposition that he was not "in any sense religious" (*id. ib.*) seems open to verbal challenge.

13. The appearance in 1678 of a Dutch treatise "against all sorts of atheists,"<sup>1</sup> and in 1681, at Amsterdam, of an attack in French on Spinoza's Scriptural criticism,<sup>2</sup> points to a movement outside of the clerical and scholarly class. All along, indeed, the atmosphere of the Arminian or "Remonstrant" School in Holland must have been fairly liberal.<sup>3</sup> Already in 1685 Locke's friend Le Clerc had taken up the position of Hobbes and Spinoza and Simon on the Pentateuch in his *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande* (translated into English and published in 1690 as "Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures").<sup>4</sup> And although Le Clerc always remained something of a Scripturalist, and refused to go the way of Spinoza, he had courage enough to revive an ancient heresy by urging, in his commentary on the fourth Gospel (1701), that "the Logos" should be rendered "Reason"—an idea which he probably derived from the Unitarian Zwicker without realizing how far it could take him. His ultimate recantation, on the subject of the authorship of the Pentateuch, served only to weaken his credit with freethinkers, and came too late to arrest the intellectual movement which he had forwarded.

A rationalizing spirit had now begun to spread widely in Holland; and within twenty years of Spinoza's death there had arisen a Dutch

<sup>1</sup> *Theologisch, Philosophisch, en Historisch proces voor God, tegen allerley Atheïsten*. By Francis Ridder, Rotterdam, 1678.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Impiété Convaincu*, "par Pierre Yvon," Amsterdam, 1681. Really by the Sieur Noël Aubert de Versé. This appears to have been reprinted in 1685 under the title *L'Impie convaincu, ou Dissertation contre Spinoza, ou l'on réfute les fondemens de son athéisme*.

<sup>3</sup> See Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 282-83, as to Locke's friendly relations with the Remonstrants in 1683-89.

<sup>4</sup> See the summary of his argument by Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 78 sq.



sect, led by Pontiaan van Hattem, a pastor at Philipsland, which blended Spinozism with evangelicalism in such a way as to incur the anathema of the Church.<sup>1</sup> In the time of the English Civil War the fear of the opponents of the new multitude of sects was that England should become "another Amsterdam."<sup>2</sup> This very multiplicity tended to promote doubt; and in 1713 we find Anthony Collins<sup>3</sup> pointing to Holland as a country where freedom to think has undermined superstition to a remarkable degree. During his stay, in the previous generation, Locke had found a measure of liberal theology, in harmony with his own; but in those days downright heresy was still dangerous. DEURHOFF (d. 1717), who translated Descartes and was accused of Spinozism, though he strongly attacked it,<sup>4</sup> had at one time to fly Holland, though by his writings he founded a pantheistic sect known as Deurhovians; and BALTHASAR BEKKER, a Cartesian, persecuted first for Socinianism, incurred so much odium by publishing in 1691 a treatise denying the reality of witchcraft that he had to give up his office as a preacher.

Cp. art. in *Biographie Universelle*, and Mosheim, 17 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 35, and notes in Reid's ed. Bekker was not the first to combat demonology on scriptural grounds; Arnold Geulincx, of Leyden, and the French Protestant refugee Daillon having less confidently put the view before him, the latter in his *Daimonologia*, 1687 (trans. in English, 1723), and the former in his system of ethics. Gassendi, as we saw, had notably discredited witchcraft a generation earlier; Reginald Scot had impugned its actuality in 1584; and Wier, still earlier, in 1583. And even before the Reformation the learned King Christian II of Denmark (deposed 1523) had vetoed witch-burning in his dominions. (Allen, *Hist. de Danemark*, French tr. 1878, i, 281.) As Scot's *Discoverie* had been translated into Dutch in 1609, Bekker probably had a lead from him. Glanvill's *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (1688), reproduced in *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, undertakes to answer some objections of the kind later urged by Bekker; and the discussion was practically international. Bekker's treatise, entitled *De Betooverde Wereld*, was translated into English—first in 1695, from the French, under the title *The World Bewitched* (only 1 vol. published), and again in 1700 as *The World turned upside down*. In the French translation, *Le Monde Enchanté* (4 tom. 1694), it had a great vogue. A refutation was published in English in *An Historical Treatise of Spirits*, by J. Beaumont, in 1705. It is noteworthy

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 836; Martineau, pp. 327-28. The first MS. of the treatise of Spinoza, *De Deo et Homine*, found and published in the nineteenth century, bore a note which showed it to have been used by a sect of Christian Spinozists. See Janet's ed. 1878, p. 3. They altered the text, putting "faith" for "opinion." *Id.* p. 53, notes.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, *Gangrana*, as before cited.

<sup>3</sup> *Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Colerus, as cited, p. lviii.

that Bekker was included as one of "four modern sages (*vier neuer Welt-Weisen*)" with Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza, in a German folio tractate (hostile) of 1702.

14. No greater service was rendered in that age to the spread of rational views than that embodied in the great *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*<sup>1</sup> of PIERRE BAYLE (1647-1706), who, born in France, but driven out by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, spent the best part of his life and did his main work at Rotterdam. Persecuted there for his freethinking, to the extent of having to give up his professorship, he yet produced a virtual encyclopedia for freethinkers in his incomparable Dictionary, baffling hostility by the Pyrrhonian impartiality with which he handled all religious questions. In his youth, when sent by his Protestant father to study at Toulouse, he had been temporarily converted, as was the young Gibbon later, to Catholicism;<sup>2</sup> and the retrospect of that experience seems in Bayle's case, as in Gibbon's, to have been a permanent motive to practical skepticism.<sup>3</sup> But, again, in the one case as in the other, skepticism was fortified by abundant knowledge. Bayle had read everything and mastered every controversy, and was thereby the better able to seem to have no convictions of his own. But even apart from the notable defence of the character of atheists dropped by him in the famous *Pensées diverses sur la Comète* (1682), and in the *Éclaircissements* in which he defended it, it is abundantly evident that he was an unbeliever. The only alternative view is that he was strictly or philosophically a skeptic, reaching no conclusions for himself; but this is excluded by the whole management of his expositions.<sup>4</sup> It is recorded that it was his vehement description of himself as a Protestant "in the full force of the term," accompanied with a quotation from Lucretius, that set the clerical diplomatist Polignac upon re-reading the Roman atheist and writing his poem *Anti-Lucretius*.<sup>5</sup> Bayle's ostensible Pyrrhonism was simply the tactic forced on him by his conditions; and it was the positive unbelievers who specially delighted in his volumes. He laid down no cosmic doctrines, but he illuminated all; and his air of repudiating

<sup>1</sup> First ed. Rotterdam, 2 vols. folio, 1696.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Cazes, *Pierre Bayle, sa vie, ses idées, son influence, son œuvre*, 1905, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> A movement of skepticism had probably been first set up in the young Bayle by Montaigne, who was one of his favourite authors before his conversion (Cazes, p. 5). Montaigne, it will be remembered, had been a fanatic in his youth. Thus three typical skeptics of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had known what it was to be Catholic believers.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the essay on *The Skepticism of Bayle* in Sir J. F. Stephen's *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, vol. iii, and the remarks of Perrens, *Les Libertins*, pp. 331-37.

<sup>5</sup> *Éloge de M. le Cardinal Polignac* prefixed to Bougainville's translation, *L'Anti-Lucretius*, 1767, i, 141. Bayle's quoted words are: "Oui, monsieur, je suis bon Protestant, et dans toute la force du mot; car au fond de mon âme je proteste contre tout ce qui se dit et tout ce qui se fait."



such views as Spinoza's had the effect rather of forcing Spinozists to leave neutral ground than of rehabilitating orthodoxy.

On one theme he spoke without any semblance of doubt. Above all men who had yet written he is the champion of toleration.<sup>1</sup> At a time when in England the school of Locke still held that atheism must not be tolerated, he would accept no such position, insisting that error as such is not culpable, and that, save in the case of a sect positively inciting to violence and disorder, all punishment of opinion is irrational and unjust.<sup>2</sup> On this theme, moved by the memory of his own life of exile and the atrocious persecution of the Protestants of France, he lost his normal imperturbability, as in his Letter to an Abbé (if it be really his), entitled *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand*, in which a controlled passion of accusation makes every sentence bite like an acid, leaving a mark that no dialectic can efface. But it was not only from Catholicism that he suffered, and not only to Catholics that his message was addressed. One of his most malignant enemies was the Protestant Jurieu, who it was that succeeded in having him deprived of his chair of philosophy and history at Rotterdam (1693) on the score of the freethinking of his *Pensées sur la Comète*. This wrong cast a shadow over his life, reducing him to financial straits in which he had to curtail greatly the plan of his Dictionary. Further, it moved him to some inconsistent censure of the political writings of French Protestant refugees<sup>3</sup>—Jurieu being the reputed author of a violent attack on the rule of Louis XIV, under the title *Les Soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté* (1689).<sup>4</sup> Yet again, the malicious Jurieu induced the Consistory of Rotterdam to censure the Dictionary on the score of the tone and tendency of the article "David" and the renewed vindications of atheists.

But nothing could turn Bayle from his loyalty to reason and toleration; and the malice of the bigots could not deprive him of his literary vogue, which was in the ratio of his unparalleled industry. As a mere writer he is admirable: save in point of sheer wit, of which, however, he has not a little, he is to this day as readable as Voltaire. By force of unfailing lucidity, wisdom, and

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the testimony of Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 55. Besides the writings above cited, note, in the *Dictionnaire*, art. MAHOMET, § ix; art. CONECTE; art. SIMONIDE, notes H and G; art. SPONDE, note C.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentaire philosophique sur la parabole: Contrains-les d'entrer*, 2e ptie, vi. Cp. the *Critique générale de l'histoire du Calvinisme du Père Maimbourg*, passim.

<sup>3</sup> See pref. to Eng. tr. of Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*, 1711.

<sup>4</sup> Rep. at Amsterdam, 1788, under the title, *Vœux d'un Patriote*. Jurieu's authorship is not certain. Cp. Ch. Nodier, *Mélanges tirés d'une petite bibliothèque*, 1829, p. 357. But it is more likely than the alternative ascription to Le Vassor. The book made such a sensation that the police of Louis XIV destroyed every copy they could find; and in 1772 the Chancellor Maupeou was said to have paid 500 livres for a copy at auction over the Duc d'Orléans.

knowledge, he made the conquest of literary Europe; and fifty years after his death we find the Jesuit Delamare in his (anonymous) apologetic treatise, *La Foi justifiée de tout reproche de contradiction avec la raison* (1761), speaking of him to the deists as "their theologian, their doctor, their oracle."<sup>1</sup> He was indeed no less; and his serene exposure of the historic failure of Christianity was all the more deadly as coming from a master of theological history.

15. Meantime, Spinoza had reinforced the critical movement in France,<sup>2</sup> where decline of belief can be seen proceeding after as before the definite adoption of pietistic courses by the king, under the influence of Madame de Maintenon. Abbadie, writing his *Traité de la vérité de la religion chrétienne* at Berlin in 1684, speaks of an "infinity" of prejudiced deists as against the "infinity" of prejudiced believers<sup>3</sup>—evidently thinking of northern Europeans in general; and he strives hard to refute both Hobbes and Spinoza on points of Biblical criticism. In France he could not turn the tide. That radical distrust of religious motives and illumination which can be seen growing up in every country in modern Europe where religion led to war, was bound to be strengthened by the spectacle of the reformed sensualist harrying heresy in his own kingdom in the intervals of his wars with his neighbours. The crowning folly of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes<sup>4</sup> (1685), forcing the flight from France of some three hundred thousand industrious<sup>5</sup> and educated inhabitants for the offence of Protestantism, was as mad a blow to religion as to the State. Less paralysing to economic life than the similar policy of the Church against the Moriscoes in Spain, it is no less striking a proof of the paralysis of practical judgment to which unreasoning faith and systematic ecclesiasticism can lead. Orthodoxy in France was as ecstatic in its praise of the act as had been that of Spain in the case of the expulsion of the Moriscoes. The deed is not to be laid at the single door of the king or of any of his advisers, male or female: the act which deprived France of a vast host of her soundest citizens was applauded by

<sup>1</sup> Ed. 1766, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* had been translated into French in 1678 by Saint-Glain, a Protestant, who gave it no fewer than three other titles in succession to evade prosecution. (Note to Colerus in Gfrörer's ed. of Spinoza, p. xlix.) In addition to the work of Aubert de Versé, above mentioned, replies were published by Simon, De la Motte (minister of the Savoy Chapel, London), Lami, a Benedictine, and others. Their spirit may be divined from Lami's title, *Nouvel athéisme renversé*, 1706.

<sup>3</sup> Tom. I, § ii, ch. ix (ed. 1864, i, 134, 177).

<sup>4</sup> The destruction of Protestant liberties was not the work of the single Act of Revocation. It had begun in detail as early as 1663. From the withholding of court favour it proceeded to subsidies for conversions, and thence to a graduated series of invasions of Protestant rights, so that the formal Revocation was only the violent consummation of a process. See the recital in Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, pp. 46-52.

<sup>5</sup> As to the loss to French industry see Bonet-Maury, as cited, p. 59, and refs.



nearly all cultured Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> Not merely the bishops, Bossuet and Fénelon<sup>2</sup> and Masillon, but the Jansenist Arnauld; not merely the female devotees, Mademoiselle de Scudéry and Madame Deshoulières, but Racine, La Bruyère, and the senile la Fontaine—all extolled the senseless deed. The not over-pious Madame de Sévigné was delighted with the "dragonnades," declaring that "nothing could be finer: no king has done or will do anything more memorable"; the still less mystical Bussy, author of the *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, was moved to pious exultation; and the dying Chancellor le Tellier, on signing the edict of revocation, repeated the legendary cry of Simeon, *Nunc dimitte servum tuum, Domine!* To this pass had the Catholic creed and discipline brought the mind of France. Only the men of affairs, nourished upon realities—the Vaubans, Saint Simons, and Catinats—realized the insanity of the action, which Colbert (d. 1683) would never have allowed to come to birth.

The triumphers, doubtless, did not contemplate the expatriation of the myriads of Protestants who escaped over the frontiers in the closing years of the century in spite of all the efforts of the royal police, "carrying with them," as a later French historian writes, "our arts, the secrets of our manufactures, and their hatred of the king." The Catholics, as deep in civics as in science, thought only of the humiliation and subjection of the heretics—doubtless feeling that they were getting a revenge against Protestantism for the Test Act and the atrocities of the Popish Plot mania in England. The blow recoiled on their country. Within a generation, their children were enduring the agonies of utter defeat at the hands of a coalition of Protestant nations every one of which had been strengthened by the piously exiled sons of France; and in the midst of their mortal struggle the revolted Protestants of the Cévennes so furiously assailed from the rear that the drain upon the king's forces precipitated the loss of their hold on Germany.

For every Protestant who crossed the frontiers between 1685 and 1700, perhaps, a Catholic neared or crossed the line between indifference and active doubt. The steady advance of science all the while infallibly undermined faith; and hardly was the bolt launched against the Protestants when new sapping and mining was going on. FONTENELLE (1657–1757), whose *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) popularized for the elegant world the new cosmology,

<sup>1</sup> See Duruy, *Hist. de la France*, II, 253; Bonet-Maury, as cited, pp. 53–66.

<sup>2</sup> As to whose attitude at this crisis see O. Douen, *L'Intolérance de Fénelon*, 1880.

cannot but have undermined dogmatic faith in some directions; above all by his graceful and skilful *Histoire des Oracles* (also 1686), where "the argumentation passes beyond the thesis advanced. All that he says of oracles could be said of miracles."<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits found the book essentially "impious"; and a French culture-historian sees in it "the first attack which directs the scientific spirit against the foundations of Christianity. All the purely philosophic arguments with which religion has been assailed are in principle in the work of Fontenelle."<sup>2</sup> In his abstract thinking he was no less radical, and his *Traité de la Liberté*<sup>3</sup> established so well the determinist position that it was decisively held by the majority of the French freethinkers who followed. Living to his hundredth year, he could join hands with the freethought of Gassendi and Voltaire,<sup>4</sup> Descartes and Diderot. Yet we shall find him later, in his official capacity of censor of literature, refusing to pass heretical books, on principles that would have vetoed his own. He is in fact a type of the freethought of the age of Louis XIV—Epicurean in the common sense, unheroic, resolute only to evade penalties, guiltless of over-zeal. Not in that age could men generate an enthusiasm for truth.

16. Of the new Epicureans, the most famous in his day was SAINT-EVREMOND,<sup>5</sup> who, exiled from France for his politics, maintained both in London and in Paris, by his writings, a leadership in polite letters. In England he greatly influenced young men like Bolingbroke; and a translation (attributed to Dryden) of one of his writings seems to have given Bishop Butler the provocation to the first and weakest chapter of his *Analogy*.<sup>6</sup> As to his skepticism there was no doubt in his own day; and his compliments to Christianity are much on a par with those paid later by the equally conforming and unbelieving Shaftesbury, whom he also anticipated in his persuasive advocacy of toleration.<sup>7</sup> REGNARD, the dramatist, had a similar private repute as an "Epicurean." And even among the nominally orthodox writers of the time in France a subtle skepticism touches nearly all opinion. La Bruyère is almost the only lay classic of the period who is pronouncedly religious; and his essay on the freethinkers,<sup>8</sup> against whom his reasoning is so forcibly

<sup>1</sup> Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 627.

<sup>2</sup> *Id. ib.* Cp. Demogéot, p. 468.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed till 1743, in the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*; and still read in MS. by Grimm in 1754. Fontenelle was also credited with a heretical letter on the resurrection, and an essay on the Infinite, pointing to disbelief. It should be noted, however, that he stands for deism in his essay, *De l'existence de Dieu*, which is a guarded application of the design argument against what was then assumed to be the only alternative—the "fortuitous concurrence of atoms."

<sup>4</sup> But Voltaire and he were not at one. He is the "nain de Saturne" in *Micromégas*.

<sup>5</sup> B. 1613; d. 1703. A man who lived to ninety can have been no great debauchee.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Gidel, *Étude* prefixed to *Œuvres Choies de Saint-Evremond*, ed. Garnier, pp. 64–69.

<sup>8</sup> *Caractères* (1687), ch. xvi: *Les Esprits Forts*.



feeble, testifies to their numbers and to the stress of debate set up by them. Even he, too, writes as a deist against atheists, hardly as a believing Christian. If he were a believer he certainly found no comfort in his faith: whatever were his capacity for good feeling, no great writer of his age betrays such bitterness of spirit, such suffering from the brutalities of life, such utter disillusionment, such unfaith in men. And a certain doubt is cast upon all his professions of opinion by the sombre avowal: "A man born a Christian and a Frenchman finds himself constrained<sup>1</sup> in satire: the great subjects are forbidden him: he takes them up at times, and then turns aside to little things, which he elevates by his.....genius and his style."<sup>2</sup>

M. Lanson remarks that "we must not let ourselves be abused by the last chapter [*Des esprits forts*], a collection of philosophic reflections and reasonings, where La Bruyère mingles Plato, Descartes, and Pascal in a vague Christian spiritualism. This chapter, evidently sincere, but without individuality, and containing only the reflex of the thoughts of others, is not a conclusion to which the whole work conducts. It marks, on the contrary, the lack of conclusion and of general views. What is more, with the chapter *On the Sovereign*, placed in the middle of the volume, it is destined to disarm the temporal and spiritual powers, to serve as passport for the independent freedom of observation in the rest of the *Caractères*" (p. 599).

On this it may be remarked that the essay in question is not so much Christian as theistic; but the suggestion as to the object is plausible. Taine (*Essais de critique et d'histoire*, ed. 1901) first remarks (p. 11) on the "christianisme" of the essay, and then decides (p. 12) that "he merely exposes in brief and imperious style the reasonings of the school of Descartes." It should be noted, however, that in this essay La Bruyère does not scruple to write: "If all religion is a respectful fear of God, what is to be thought of those who dare to wound him in his most living image, which is the sovereign?" (§ 27 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 578. Pascal holds the same tone. *Vie*, par Madame Perier.) This appears first in the fourth edition; and many other passages were inserted in that and later issues: the whole is an inharmonious mosaic.

Concerning La Bruyère, the truth would seem to be that the inconsequences in the structure of his essays were symptomatic of variability in his moods and opinions. Taine and Lanson are struck by the premonitions of the revolution in his famous picture of the peasants, and other passages; and the latter remarks (p. 603) that "the points touched by La Bruyère are precisely those where the writers of the next age undermined

<sup>1</sup> "Is embarrassed" in the first edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Des ouvrages de l'esprit*, near end. § 65 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 176.

the old order: La Bruyère is already *philosophe* in the sense which Voltaire and Diderot gave to that term." But we cannot be sure that the plunges into convention were not real swervings of a vacillating spirit. It is difficult otherwise to explain his recorded approbation of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*, published posthumously under his name (1699), appear to be spurious. This was emphatically asserted by contemporaries (*Sentiments critiques sur les Caractères de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 447; *Apologie de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 357, both cited by Walckenaer) who on other points were in opposition. Baron Walckenaer (*Étude*, ed. cited, p. 76 sq.) pronounces that they were the work of Elliès du Pin, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and gives good reasons for the attribution. The Abbé d'Olivet in his *Histoire de l'Académie française* declares that La Bruyère only drafted them, and that du Pin edited them; but the internal evidence is against their containing anything of La Bruyère's draught. They are indeed so feeble that no admirer cares to accept them as his. (Cp. note to Suard's *Notice sur la personne et les écrits de la Bruyère*, in Didot ed. 1865, p. 20.) Written against Madame Guyon, they were not worth his while.

If the apologetics of Huet and Pascal, Bossuet and Fénelon, had any influence on the rationalistic spirit, it was but in the direction of making it more circumspect, never of driving it out. It is significant that whereas in the year of the issue of the *Demonstratio* the Duchesse d'Orléans could write that "every young man either is or affects to be an atheist," Le Vassor wrote in 1688: "People talk only of *reason*, of *good taste*, of *force of mind*, of the advantage of those who can raise themselves above the *prejudices* of education and of the society in which one is born. Pyrrhonism is the fashion in many things: men say that rectitude of mind consists in 'not believing lightly' and in being 'ready to doubt.'"<sup>1</sup> Pascal and Huet between them had only multiplied doubters. On both lines, obviously, freethought was the gainer; and in a Jesuit treatise, *Le Monde condamné par lui-même*, published in 1695, the *Préface contre l'incrédulité des libertins* sets out with the avowal that "to draw the condemnation of the world out of its own mouth, it is necessary to attack first the incredulity of the unbelievers (*libertins*), who compose the main part of it, and who under some appearance of Christianity conceal a mind either Judaic [read *deistic*] or pagan." Such was France to a religious eye at the height of the Catholic triumph over Protestantism. The statement that the *libertins*

<sup>1</sup> M. Le Vassor, *De la véritable religion*, 1688, préf. Le Vassor speaks in the same preface of "this multitude of *libertins* and of unbelievers which now terrifies us." His book seeks to vindicate the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, inspiration, prophecies, and miracles, against Spinoza, Le Clerc, and others.



formed the majority of "the world" is of course a furious extravagance. But there must have been a good deal of unbelief to have moved a priest to such an explosion. And the unbelief must have been as much a product of revulsion from religious savagery as a result of direct critical impulse, for there was as yet no circulation of positively freethinking literature. For a time, indeed, there was a general falling away in French intellectual prestige,<sup>1</sup> the result, not of the mere "protective spirit" in literature, as is sometimes argued, but of the immense diversion of national energy under Louis XIV to militarism;<sup>2</sup> and the freethinkers lost some of the confidence as well as some of the competence they had exhibited in the days of Molière.<sup>3</sup> There had been too little solid thinking done to preclude a reaction when the king, led by Madame de Maintenon, went about to atone for his debaucheries by an old age of piety. "The king had been put in such fear of hell that he believed that all who had not been instructed by the Jesuits were damned. To ruin anyone it was necessary only to say, 'He is a Huguenot, or a Jansenist,' and the thing was done."<sup>4</sup> In this state of things there spread in France the revived doctrine or temper of Quietism, set up by the Spanish priest, Miguel de Molinos (1640-1697), whose *Spiritual Guide*, published in Spanish in 1675, appeared in 1681 in Italian at Rome, where he was a highly influential confessor. It was soon translated into Latin, French, and Dutch. In 1685 he was cited before the Inquisition; in 1687 the book was condemned to be burned, and he was compelled to retract sixty-eight propositions declared to be heretical; whereafter, nonetheless, he was imprisoned till his death in 1696. In France, whence the attack on him had begun, his teaching made many converts, notably Madame Guyon, and may be said to have created a measure of religious revival. But when Fénelon took it up (1697), modifying the terminology of Molinos to evade the official condemnation, he was bitterly attacked by Bossuet as putting forth doctrine incompatible with Christianity; the prelates fought for two years; and finally the Pope condemned Fénelon's book, whereupon he submitted, limiting his polemic to attacks on the Jansenists. Thus the gloomy orthodoxy of the court and the mysticism of the new school alike failed to affect the general intelligence; there was no real building up of belief; and the forward movement at length recommenced.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Huet, *Huetiana*, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> The question is discussed in the author's *Buckle and his Critics*, pp. 324-42, and ed. of Buckle's *Introduction*. Buckle's view, however, was held by Huet, *Huetiana*, § 73.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Ferrens, pp. 310-14.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, cited by Rocquain, *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878, p. 3, note.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### § 1

It appears from our survey that the "deistic movement," commonly assigned to the eighteenth century, had been abundantly prepared for in the seventeenth, which, in turn, was but developing ideas current in the sixteenth. When, in 1696, JOHN TOLAND published his *Christianity Not Mystical*, the sensation it made was due not so much to any unheard-of boldness in its thought as to the simple fact that deistic ideas had thus found their way into print.<sup>1</sup> So far the deistic position was explicitly represented in English literature only by the works of Herbert, Hobbes, and Blount; and of these only the first (who wrote in Latin) and the third had put the case at any length. Against the deists or atheists of the school of Hobbes, and the Scriptural Unitarians who thought with Newton and Locke, there stood arrayed the great mass of orthodox intolerance which clamoured for the violent suppression of every sort of "infidelity." It was this feeling, of which the army of ignorant rural clergy were the spokesmen, that found vent in the Blasphemy Act of 1697. The new literary growth dating from the time of Toland is the evidence of the richness of the rationalistic soil already created. Thinking men craved a new atmosphere. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* is an unsuccessful compromise: Toland's book begins a new propagandist era.

Toland's treatise,<sup>2</sup> heretical as it was, professed to be a defence of the faith, and avowedly founded on Locke's anonymous *Reasonableness of Christianity*, its young author being on terms of acquaintance with the philosopher.<sup>3</sup> He claimed, in fact, to take for granted "the Divinity of the New Testament," and to "demonstrate the verity of divine revelation against atheists and all enemies of revealed religion," from whom, accordingly, he expected to receive

<sup>1</sup> As Voltaire noted, Toland was persecuted in Ireland for his circumspect and cautious first book, and left unmolested in England when he grew much more aggressive.

<sup>2</sup> First ed. anonymous. Second ed., of same year, gives author's name. Another ed. in 1702.

<sup>3</sup> See *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 129.



no quarter. Brought up, as he declared, "from my cradle, in the grossest superstition and idolatry," he had been divinely led to make use of his own reason; and he assured his Christian readers of his perfect sincerity in "defending the true religion."<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later, his primary positions were hardly to be distinguished from those of ratiocinative champions of the creed, save in respect that he was challenging orthodoxy where they were replying to unbelievers. Toland, however, lacked alike the timidity and the prudence which so safely guided Locke in his latter years; and though his argument was only a logical and outspoken extension of Locke's position, to the end of showing that there was nothing supra-rational in Christianity of Locke's type, it separated him from "respectable" society in England and Ireland for the rest of his life. The book was "presented" by the Grand Juries of Middlesex and Dublin;<sup>2</sup> the dissenters in Dublin being chiefly active in denouncing it—with or without knowledge of its contents;<sup>3</sup> half-a-dozen answers appeared; and when in 1698 Toland produced another, entitled *Amyntor*, showing the infirm foundation of the Christian canon, there was again a speedy crop of replies. Despite the oversights inevitable to such pioneer work, this opens, from the side of freethought, the era of documentary criticism of the New Testament; and in some of his later freethinking books, as the *Nazarenus* (1718) and the *Pantheisticon* (1720), he continues to show himself in advance of his time in "opening new windows" for his mind.<sup>4</sup> The latter work represents in particular the influence of Spinoza, whom he had formerly criticized somewhat forcibly<sup>5</sup> for his failure to recognize that motion is inherent in matter. On that head he lays down<sup>6</sup> the doctrine that "motion is but matter under a certain consideration"—an essentially "materialist" position, deriving from the pre-Socratic Greeks, and incidentally affirmed by Bacon.<sup>7</sup> He was not exactly an industrious student or writer; but he had scholarly knowledge and instinct, and several of his works show close study of Bayle.

As regards his more original views on Christian origins, he is not impressive to the modern reader; but theses which to-day stand for little were in their own day important. Thus in his *Hodegus* (pt. i

<sup>1</sup> Pref. to 2nd ed. pp. vi, viii, xxiv, xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1701 a vote for its prosecution was passed in the Lower House of Convocation. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke*, etc. p. 228.

<sup>4</sup> No credit for this is given in Sir Leslie Stephen's notice of Toland in *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, 101-12. Compare the estimate of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 272-76 (Eng. tr. i, 324-30). Lange perhaps idealizes his subject somewhat.

<sup>5</sup> In two letters published along with the *Letters to Serena*, 1704.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters to Serena*, etc. 1704, pref.

<sup>7</sup> *De Principiis atque Originibus* (Routledge's 1-vol. ed. pp. 651, 667).

of the *Tetradymus*, 1720) it is elaborately argued that the "pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day" was no miracle, but the regular procedure of guides in deserts, where night marches are the rule; the "cloud" being simply the smoke of the vanguard's fire, which by night flared red. Later criticism decides that the whole narrative of the Exodus is myth. Toland's method, however, was relatively so advanced that it had not been abandoned by theological "rationalists" a century later. Of that movement he must be ranked an energetic pioneer: though he lacked somewhat the strength of character that in his day was peculiarly needed to sustain a freethinker. Much of his later life was spent abroad; and his *Letters to Serena* (1704) show him permitted to discourse to the Queen of Prussia on such topics as the origin and force of prejudice, the history of the doctrine of immortality, and the origin of idolatry. He pays his correspondent the compliment of treating his topics with much learning; and his manner of assuming her own orthodoxy in regard to revelation could have served as a model to Gibbon.<sup>1</sup> But, despite such distinguished patronage, his life was largely passed in poverty, cheerfully endured,<sup>2</sup> with only chronic help from well-to-do sympathizers, such as Shaftesbury, who was not over-sympathetic. When it is noted that down to 1761 there had appeared no fewer than fifty-four answers to his first book,<sup>3</sup> his importance as an intellectual influence may be realized.

A certain amount of evasion was forced upon Toland by the Blasphemy Law of 1697; inferentially, however, he was a thorough deist until he became pantheist; and the discussion over his books showed that views essentially deistic were held even among his antagonists. One, an Irish bishop, got into trouble by setting forth a notion of deity which squared with that of Hobbes.<sup>4</sup> The whole of our present subject, indeed, is much complicated by the distribution of heretical views among the nominally orthodox, and of orthodox views among heretics.<sup>5</sup> Thus the school of Cudworth, zealous against atheism, was less truly theistic than that of Blount,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Serena*, pp. 19, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry Craik (cited by Temple Scott, Bohn ed. of Swift's Works, iii, 9) speaks of Toland as "a man of utterly worthless character." This is mere malignant abuse. Toland is described by Pope in a note to the *Dunciad* (ii, 399) as a spy to Lord Oxford. There could hardly be a worse authority for such a charge.

<sup>3</sup> Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Stephen, as cited, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> "The Christianity of many writers consisted simply in expressing deist opinions in the old-fashioned phraseology" (Stephen, i, 91).

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Pünjer, *Christ. Philos. of Religion*, i, 289-90; and *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94-98. Lord Morley's reference to "the godless deism of the English school" (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 69) is puzzling. Cp. Rosenkranz (*Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 421) on "den ungöttlichen Gott der Jesuiten und Jansenisten, dies monströse Zerrbild des alten Jehovah, diesen apotheosirten Tyrannen, diesen Moloch." The latter application of the term seems the more plausible.



who, following Hobbes, pointed out that to deny to God a continual personal and providential control of human affairs was to hold to atheism under the name of theism;<sup>1</sup> whereas Cudworth, the champion of theism against the atheists, entangled himself hopelessly<sup>2</sup> in a theory which made deity endow Nature with "plastic" powers and leave it to its own evolution. The position was serenely demolished by Bayle,<sup>3</sup> as against Le Clerc, who sought to defend it; and in England the clerical outcry was so general that Cudworth gave up authorship.<sup>4</sup> Over the same crux, in Ireland, Bishop Browne and Bishop Berkeley accused each other of promoting atheism; and Archbishop King was embroiled in the dispute.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the theistic Descartes had laid down a "mechanical" theory of the universe which perfectly comported with atheism, and partly promoted that way of thinking;<sup>6</sup> and a selection from Gassendi's ethical writings, translated into English<sup>7</sup> (1699), wrought in the same direction. The Church itself contained Cartesians and Cudworthians, Socinians and deists.<sup>8</sup> Each group, further, had inner differences as to free-will<sup>9</sup> and Providence; and the theistic schools of Newton, Clarke, and Leibnitz rejected each other's philosophies as well as that of Descartes. Leibnitz complained grimly that Newton and his followers had "a very odd opinion concerning the Work of God," making the universe an imperfect machine, which the deity had frequently to mend; and treating space as an organ by which God perceives things, which are thus regarded as not produced or maintained by him.<sup>10</sup> Newton's principles of explanation, he insisted, were those of the materialists.<sup>11</sup> John Hutchinson, a professor at Cambridge, in his *Treatise of Power, Essential and Mechanical*, also bitterly assailed Newton as a deistical and anti-scriptural sophist.<sup>12</sup> Clarke, on the other hand, declared that the philosophy of Leibnitz was "tending to banish God from the

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay's description of Blount as an atheist is therefore doubly unwarranted.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>3</sup> *Continuation des Pensées Diverses.....à l'occasion de la Comète.....de 1680*, Amsterdam, 1705, i. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Warburton, *Divine Legation*, vol. ii, preface.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen, *English Thought*, i, 114-18.

<sup>6</sup> This, according to John Craig, was Newton's opinion. "The reason of his [Newton's] showing the errors of Cartes's philosophy was because he thought it made on purpose to be the foundation of infidelity." Letter to Conduitt, April 7, 1727, in Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 315. Clarke, in his Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter, expresses a similar view.

<sup>7</sup> "Three Discourses of Happiness, Virtue, and Liberty, Collected from the Works of the Learned Gassendi by Monsieur Bernier. Translated out of the French, 1699."

<sup>8</sup> Cp. W. Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times*, 1901, i, 175.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Leslie Stephen (i, 33) makes the surprising statement that a "dogmatic assertion of free-will became a mark of the whole deist and semi-deist school." On the contrary, Hobbes and Anthony Collins, not to speak of Locke, wrote with uncommon power against the conception of free-will, and had many disciples on that head.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to the Princess of Wales, November, 1715, in Brewster, ii, 284-85.

<sup>11</sup> Second Letter to Clarke, par. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson, 1755, pp. 149-63.

world."<sup>1</sup> Alongside of such internecine strife, it was not surprising that the great astronomer Halley, who accepted Newton's principles in physics, was commonly reputed an atheist; and that the free-thinkers pitted his name in that connection against Newton's.<sup>2</sup> As it was he who first suggested<sup>3</sup> the idea of the total motion of the entire solar system in space—described by a modern pietist as "this great cosmical truth, the grandest in astronomy"<sup>4</sup>—they were not ill justified. It can hardly be doubted that if intellectual England could have been polled in 1710, under no restraints from economic, social, and legal pressure, some form of rationalism inconsistent with Christianity would have been found to be nearly as common as orthodoxy. In outlying provinces, in Devon and Cornwall, in Ulster, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as in the metropolis, the pressure of deism on the popular creed evoked expressions of Arian and Socinian thought among the clergy.<sup>5</sup> It was, in fact, the various restraints under notice that determined the outward fortunes of belief and unbelief, and have substantially determined them since. When the devout Whiston was deposed from his professorship for his Arianism, and the unbelieving Saunderson was put in his place,<sup>6</sup> and when Simson was suspended from his ministerial functions in Glasgow,<sup>7</sup> the lesson was learned that outward conformity was the sufficient way to income.<sup>8</sup>

Hard as it was, however, to kick against the pricks of law and prejudice, it is clear that many in the upper and middle classes privately did so. The clerical and the new popular literature of the time prove this abundantly. In the *Tatler* and its successors,<sup>9</sup> the decorous Addison and the indecorous Steele, neither of them a competent thinker, frigidly or furiously asperse the new tribe of freethinkers; while the evangelically pious Berkeley and the extremely unevangelical Swift rival each other in the malice of

<sup>1</sup> Clarke's Answer to Leibnitz's First Letter, end.

<sup>2</sup> Berkeley, *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, par. vii; and Stock's Memoir of Berkeley. Cp. Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 408.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Philosophical Transactions*, 1718, No. 355, i, v, vi.

<sup>4</sup> Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Cent.* ed. 1892, iii, 22-24.

<sup>6</sup> The tradition of Saunderson's unbelief is constant. In the memoir prefixed to his *Elements of Algebra* (1740) no word is said of his creed, though at death he received the sacrament.

<sup>7</sup> See *The State of the Process depending against Mr. John Simson*, Edinburgh, 1728. Simson always expressed himself piously, but had thrown out such expressions as *Ratio est principium et fundamentum theologiae*, which "contravened the Act of Assembly, 1717" (vol. cited, p. 316). The "process" against him began in 1714, and dragged on for nearly twenty years, with the result of his resigning his professorship of theology at Glasgow in 1729, and seceding from the Associate Presbytery in 1733. Burton, *History of Scotland*, viii, 399-400.

<sup>8</sup> Cp. the pamphlet by "A Presbyterian of the Church of England," attributed to Bishop Hare, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 177-78, and by Lecky, iii, 25.

<sup>9</sup> *Tatler*, Nos. 12, 111, 135; *Spectator*, Nos. 234, 381, 389, 599; *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 9, 27, 35, 39, 55, 62, 70, 77, 83, 88, 126, 130, 169. Most of the *Guardian* papers cited are by Berkeley. They are extremely virulent; but Steele's run them hard.



their attacks on those who rejected their creed. Berkeley, a man of philosophic genius but intense prepossessions, maintained Christianity on grounds which are the negation of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Swift, the genius of neurotic misanthropy, who, in the words of Macaulay, "though he had no religion, had a great deal of professional spirit,"<sup>2</sup> fought venomously for the creed of salvation. And still the deists multiplied. In the EARL OF SHAFTESBURY<sup>3</sup> they had a satirist with a finer and keener weapon than was wielded by either Steele or Addison, and a much better temper than was owned by Swift or Berkeley. He did not venture to parade his unbelief: to do so was positively dangerous; but his thrusts at faith left little doubt as to his theory. He was at once dealt with by the orthodox as an enemy, and as promptly adopted by the deists as a champion, important no less for his ability than for his rank. Nor, indeed, is he lacking in boldness in comparison with contemporary writers. The anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Natural History of Superstition*, by the deist John Trenchard, M.P. (1709), does not venture on overt heresy. But Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708), his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), and his treatise *The Moralists* (1709), had need be anonymous because of their essential hostility to the reigning religious ethic.

Such polemic marks a new stage in rationalistic propaganda. Swift, writing in 1709, angrily proposes to "prevent the publishing of such pernicious works as under pretence of freethinking endeavour to overthrow those tenets in religion which have been held inviolable in almost all ages."<sup>4</sup> But his further protest that "the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and even the truth of all revelation, are daily exploded and denied in books openly printed," points mainly to the Unitarian propaganda. Among freethinkers he names, in his *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (1708), Asgill, Coward, Toland, and Tindal. But the first was an ultra-Christian; the second was a Christian upholder of the thesis that spirit is not immaterial; and the last, at that date, had published only his *Four Discourses* (collected in 1709) and his *Rights of the Christian Church*, which are anti-clerical, but not

<sup>1</sup> *Analyst*, Queries 60 and 62: *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, §§ 5, 6, 50. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 141-42.

<sup>2</sup> Letter in De Morgan's *Newton: his Friend: and his Niece*, 1885, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> The essays in the *Characteristics* (excepting the *Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit*, which was published by Toland, without permission, in 1699) appeared between 1708 and 1711, being collected in the latter year. Shaftesbury died in 1713, in which year appeared his paper on *The Judgment of Hercules*.

<sup>4</sup> *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*. Bohn ed. of *Works*, iii, 44. In this paper Swift reveals his moral standards by the avowal (p. 40) that "hypocrisy is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice: it wears the livery of religion.....and is cautious of giving scandal."

anti-Christian. Prof. Henry Dodwell, who about 1673 published *Two Letters of Advice, I, For the Susception of Holy Orders; II, For Studies Theological, especially such as are Rational*, and in 1706 an *Epistolary Discourse Concerning the Soul's Natural Mortality*, maintaining the doctrine of conditional immortality,<sup>1</sup> which he made dependent on baptism in the apostolical succession, was a devout Christian; and no writer of that date went further. Dodwell is in fact blamed by Bishop Burnet for stirring up fanaticism against lay-baptism among dissenters.<sup>2</sup> It would appear that Swift spoke mainly from hearsay, and on the strength of the conversational freethinking so common in society.<sup>3</sup> But the anonymous essays of Shaftesbury which were issued in 1709 might be the immediate provocation of his outbreak.<sup>4</sup>

An official picture of the situation is formally drawn in *A Representation of the Present State of Religion, with regard to the late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness*, drawn up by the Upper House of Convocation of the province of Canterbury in 1711.<sup>5</sup> This sets forth, as a result of the disorders of the Rebellion, a growth of all manner of unbelief and profanity, including denial of inspiration and the authority of the canon; the likening of Christian miracles to heathen fables; the treating of all religious mysteries as absurd speculations; Arianism and Socinianism and scoffing at the doctrine of the Trinity; denial of natural immortality; Erastianism; mockery of baptism and the Lord's Supper; decrying of all priests as impostors; the collecting and reprinting of infidel works; and publication of mock catechisms. It is explained that all such printing has greatly increased "since the expiration of the Act for restraining the press"; and mention is made of an Arian work just published to which the author has put his name, and which he has dedicated to the Convocation itself. This was the first volume of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, the work of a devout eccentric, who had just before been deprived of his professorship at Cambridge for his orally avowed heresy. Whiston, whose cause was

<sup>1</sup> Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought*, i, 283) speaks of Dodwell's thesis as deserving only "pity or contempt." Cp. Macaulay, *Student's ed.* ii, 107-108. But a doctrine of conditional immortality had been explicitly put by Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695, p. 13. Cp. Prof. Fraser's *Locke*, 1890, pp. 259-60, and Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 287. The difference was that Dodwell elaborately gave his reasons, which, as Dr. Clarke put it, made "all good men sorry, and all profane men rejoice."

<sup>2</sup> *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 887.

<sup>3</sup> Compare his ironical *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, 1708.

<sup>4</sup> He had, however, hailed the anonymous *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* as "very well writ," believing it to be by a friend of his own—(Robert Hunter, to whom, accordingly, it has since been mistakenly attributed by various bibliographers, including Barbier). "Enthusiasm," as meaning "popular fanaticism," was of course as repellent to a Churchman as to the deists.

<sup>5</sup> Printed in folio 1711. Rep. in vol. xi of the *Harleian Miscellany*, p. 168 sq. (2nd ed. p. 163 sq.).



championed, and whose clerical opponents were lampooned, in an indecorous but vigorous sketch, *The Tryal of William Whiston, Clerk, for defaming and denying the Holy Trinity, before the Lord Chief Justice Reason* (1712; 3rd ed. 1740), always remained perfectly devout in his Arian orthodoxy; but his and his friends' arguments were rather better fitted to make deists than to persuade Christians; and Convocation's appeal for a new Act "restraining the present excessive and scandalous liberty of printing wicked books at home, and importing the like from abroad" was not responded to. There was no love lost between Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury; but the government in which the former, a known deist, was Secretary of State, could hardly undertake to suppress the works of the latter.

## § 2

Deism had been thus made in a manner fashionable<sup>1</sup> when, in 1713, ANTHONY COLLINS (1676-1729) began a new development by his *Discourse of Freethinking*. He had previously published a notably freethinking *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason* (1707), albeit without specific impeachment of the reigning creed; carried on a discussion with Clarke on the question of the immateriality of the soul; and issued treatises entitled *Priestcraft in Perfection* (1709, dealing with the history of the Thirty-nine Articles)<sup>2</sup> and *A Vindication of the Divine Attributes* (1710), exposing the Hobbesian theism of Archbishop King on lines followed twenty years later by Berkeley in his *Minute Philosopher*. But none of these works aroused such a tumult as the *Discourse of Freethinking*, which may be said to sum up and unify the drift not only of previous English freethinking, but of the great contribution of Bayle, whose learning and temper influence all English deism from Shaftesbury onwards.<sup>3</sup> Collins's book, however, was unique in its outspokenness. To the reader of to-day, indeed, it is no very aggressive performance: the writer was a man of imperturbable amenity and genuine kindness of nature; and his style is the completest possible contrast to that of the furious replies it elicited. It was to Collins that Locke wrote, in 1703: "Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake is the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. Synge, of Dublin (afterwards Archbishop of Tuam), in his *Religion Trued by the Test of Sober and Impartial Reason*, published in 1713, seems to be writing before the issue of Collins's book when he says (*Dedication*, p. 11) that the spread of the "disease not only of Heterodoxy but of Infidelity" is "too plain to be either denied or dissembled."

<sup>2</sup> Leslie affirms in his *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated* (1711, p. 14) that the satirical *Detection* of his *Short Method with the Deists*, to which the *Truth* is a reply, was by the author of *Priestcraft in Perfection*; but, while the *Detection* has some of Collins's humour, it lacks his amenity, and is evidently not by him.

<sup>3</sup> An English translation of the *Dictionary*, in 5 vols. folio, with "many passages restored," appeared in 1734.

principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues; and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as I ever met with in anybody."<sup>1</sup> The *Discourse* does no discredit to this uncommon encomium, being a luminous and learned plea for the conditions under which alone truth can be prosperously studied, and the habits of mind which alone can attain it. Of the many replies, the most notorious is that of Bentley writing as *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, a performance which, on the strength of its author's reputation for scholarship, has been uncritically applauded by not a few critics, of whom some of the most eminent do not appear to have read Collins's treatise.<sup>2</sup> Bentley's is in reality pre-eminent only for insolence and bad faith, the latter complicated by lapses of scholarship hardly credible on its author's part.

See the details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. vii. I am compelled to call attention to the uncritical verdict given on this matter by the late Sir Leslie Stephen, who asserts (*English Thought*, i, 206) that Bentley convicts Collins of "unworthy shuffling" in respect of his claim that freethinking had "banished the devil." Bentley affirmed that this had been the work, not of the freethinkers, but of "the Royal Society, the Boyles and the Newtons"; and Sir Leslie comments that "nothing could be more true." Nothing could be more untrue. As we have seen (above p. 82), Boyle was a convinced believer in demonology; and Newton did absolutely nothing to disperse it. Glanvill, a Royal Society man, had been a vehement supporter of the belief in witchcraft; and the Society as such never meddled with the matter. As to Collins's claim for the virtue of free-thinking, Sir Leslie strangely misses the point that Collins meant by the word not unbelief, but free inquiry. He could not have meant to say that Holland was full of deists. In Collins's sense of the word, the Royal Society's work in general was freethinking work.

One mistranslation which appears to have been a printer's error, and one mis-spelling of a Greek name, are the only heads on which Bentley confutes his author. He had, in fact, neither the kind of knowledge nor the candour that could fit him to handle the problems raised. It was Bentley's cue to represent Collins as an atheist, though he was a very pronounced deist;<sup>3</sup> and in the first uproar

<sup>1</sup> *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke*, 1720, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Mark Pattison, who calls Collins's book of 178 pages a "small tract."

<sup>3</sup> "Ignorance," Collins writes, "is the foundation of Atheism, and Freethinking the cure of it" (*Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 105). Like Newton, he contemplated only an impossible atheism, never formulated by any writer. The *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Reveal'd*, of Dr. George Cheyne (1705, 2nd ed. 1715), similarly declares (pref. end) that "if the modern [i.e. Newtonian] philosophy demonstrates nothing else, yet it infallibly proves Atheism to be the most gross ignorance." Thus the vindicator of "religion" was writing in the key of the deist.



Collins thought it well to fly to Holland to avoid arrest.<sup>1</sup> But deism was too general to permit of such a representative being exiled; and he returned to study quietly, leaving Bentley's vituperation and prevarication unanswered, with the other attacks made upon him. In 1715 he published his brief but masterly *Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*—anonymous, like all his works—which remains unsurpassed as a statement of the case for Determinism.<sup>2</sup>

The welcome given to Bentley's attack upon Collins by the orthodox was warm in proportion to their sense of the general inadequacy of the apologetics on their side. Amid the common swarm of voluble futilities put forth by Churchmen, the strident vehemence as well as the erudite repute of the old scholar were fitted at least to attract the attention of lay readers in general. Most of the contemporary vindications of the faith, however, were fitted only to move intelligent men to new doubt or mere contempt. A sample of the current defence against deism is the treatise of Joseph Smith on *The Unreasonableness of Deism, or, the Certainty of a Divine Revelation*, etc. 1720, where deists in general are called "the Wicked and Unhappy men we have to deal with":<sup>3</sup> and the argumentation consists in alleging that a good God must reveal himself, and that if the miracle stories of the New Testament had been false the Jews would have exposed and discarded them. Against such nugatory traditionalism, the criticism of Collins shone with the spirit of science. Not till 1723 did he publish his next work, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, a weighty attack on the argument from prophecy, to which the replies numbered thirty-five; on which followed in 1727 his *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, a reply to criticisms. The former work was pronounced by Warburton one of the most plausible ever written against Christianity, and he might well say so. It faced the argument from prophecy not merely with the skepticism of the ordinary deist, but with that weapon of critical analysis of which the use had been briefly shown by Hobbes and Spinoza. Apparently for the first time, he pointed out that the "virgin prophecy" in Isaiah had a plain reference to contemporary and not to future events; he showed that the "out of Egypt" prophecy referred to the Hebrew past; and he revived the ancient demonstration of Porphyry that the Book of Daniel is

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Temple Scott, in his Bohn ed. of Swift's Works (III, 166), asserts that Swift's satire "frightened Collins into Holland." For this statement there is no evidence whatever, and as it stands it is unintelligible. The assertion that Collins had had to fly to Holland in 1711 (Dr. Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit.* R. P. A. 1910, p. 38) is also astray.

<sup>2</sup> Second ed. 1717. Another writer, William Lyons, was on the same track, publishing *The Infallibility of Human Judgment, its Dignity and Excellence* (2nd ed. 1720), and *A Discourse of the Necessity of Human Actions* (1730).

<sup>3</sup> Work cited, p. 13.

Maccabean. The general dilemma put by Collins—that either the prophecies must be reduced, textually and otherwise, to non-prophetic utterances, or Christianity must give up prophetic claims—has never since been solved.

The deistic movement was now in full flood, the acute MANDEVILLE<sup>1</sup> having issued in 1720 his *Free Thoughts on Religion*, and in 1723 a freshly-expanded edition of his very anti-evangelical *Fable of the Bees*; while an eccentric ex-clergyman, THOMAS WOOLSTON, who had already lost his fellowship of Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge, for vagaries of doctrine and action, contributed in 1726–28 his freshly reasoned but heedlessly ribald *Discourses on Miracles*. Voltaire, who was in England in 1728, tells that thirty thousand copies were sold;<sup>2</sup> while sixty pamphlets were written in opposition. Woolston's were indeed well fitted to arouse wrath and rejoinder. The dialectic against the argument from miracles in general, and the irrelevance or nullity of certain miracles in particular, is really cogent, and anticipates at points the thought of the nineteenth century. But Woolston was of the tribe who can argue no issue without jesting, and who stamp levity on every cause by force of innate whimsicality. Thus he could best sway the light-hearted when his cause called for the winning-over of the earnest. Arguments that might have been made convincing were made to pass as banter, and serious spirits were repelled. It was during this debate that CONYERS MIDDLETON, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, produced his *Letter from Rome* (1729), wherein the part of paganism in Christianity is so set forth as to carry inference further than the argument ostensibly goes. In that year the heads of Oxford University publicly lamented the spread of open deism among the students; and the proclamation did nothing to check the contagion. In *Fogg's Weekly Journal* of July 4, 1730, it is announced that "one of the principal colleges in Oxford has of late been infested with deists; and that three deistical students have been expelled; and a fourth has had his degree deferred two years, during which he is to be closely confined in college; and, among other things, is to translate Leslie's *Short and*

<sup>1</sup> As to whose positions see a paper in the writer's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> There were six separate *Discourses*. Voltaire speaks of "three editions *coup sur coup* of ten thousand each" (*Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*—in *Œuvres*, ed. 1792, lxviii, 359). This seems extremely unlikely as to any one *Discourse*; and even 5,000 copies of each *Discourse* is a hardly credible sale, though the writer of the sketch of his life (1733) says that "the sale of Mr. Woolston's works was very great." In any case, Woolston's *Discourses* are now seldom met with than Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*. Alberti (*Briefe betreffend den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*) wrote in 1752 that the *Discourses* were even in that day somewhat rare, and seldom found together. Many copies were probably destroyed by the orthodox, and many would doubtless be thrown away, as tracts so often are.



*Easy Method with the Deists.*"<sup>1</sup> It is not hard to divine the effect of such exegetic methods. In 1731, the author of an apologetic pamphlet in reply to Woolston laments that even at the universities young men "too often" become tainted with "infidelity"; and, on the other hand, directing his battery against those who "causelessly profess to build their skeptical notions" on the writings of Locke, he complains of Dr. Holdsworth and other academic polemicists who had sought to rob orthodoxy of the credit of such a champion as Locke by "consigning him over to that class of freethinkers and skeptics to which he was an adversary."<sup>2</sup>

With the most famous work of MATTHEW TINDAL,<sup>3</sup> *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730), the excitement seems to have reached high-water mark. Here was vivacity without flippancy, and argument without irrelevant mirth; and the work elicited from first to last over a hundred and fifty replies, at home and abroad. Tindal's thesis is that the idea of a good God involved that of a simple, perfect, and universal religion, which must always have existed among mankind, and must have essentially consisted in moral conduct. Christianity, insofar as it is true, must therefore be a statement of this primordial religion; and moral reason must be the test, not tradition or Scripture. One of the first replies was the *Vindication of Scripture* by Waterland, to which Middleton promptly offered a biting retort in a *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731) that serves to show the slightness of its author's faith. After demolishing Waterland's case as calculated rather to arouse than to allay skepticism, he undertakes to offer a better reply of his own. It is to the simple effect that some religion is necessary to mankind in modern as in ancient times; that Christianity meets the need very well; and that to set up reason in its place is "impracticable" and "the attempt therefore foolish and irrational," in addition to being "criminal and immoral," when politically considered.<sup>4</sup> Such legalist criticism, if seriously meant, was hardly likely to discredit Tindal's book. Its directness and simplicity of appeal to what passed for theistic common-sense were indeed fitted to give it the widest audience yet won by any deist; and its anti-clericalism would carry it far among his fellow Whigs to begin with.<sup>5</sup> One tract of the

<sup>1</sup> Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ed. 1871, I, 65-66. <sup>2</sup> *The Infidel Convicted*, 1731, pp. 33, 62.  
<sup>3</sup> Tindal (1653-1733) was the son of a clergyman, and in 1678 was elected a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. From 1685 to 1688 he was a Roman Catholic. Under William III he wrote three works on points of political freedom—one, 1698, on *The Liberty of the Press*. His *Rights of the Christian Church*, anonymously published in 1706, a defence of Erastianism, made a great sensation, and was prosecuted—only to be reprinted. His later *Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church* was in 1710, by order of the House of Commons, burned by the common hangman.  
<sup>4</sup> Middleton's *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, III, 50-56.  
<sup>5</sup> Tindal (Voltaire tells) regarded Pope as devoid of genius and imagination, and so trebly earned his place in the *Dunciad*.

period, dedicated to the Queen Regent, complains that "the present raging infidelity threatens an universal infection," and that it is not confined to the capital, but "is disseminated even to the confines of your kingdom."<sup>1</sup> Tindal, like Collins, wrote anonymously, and so escaped prosecution, dying in 1733, when the second part of his book, left ready for publication, was deliberately destroyed by Bishop Gibson, into whose hands it came. In 1736 he and Shaftesbury are described by an orthodox apologist as the "two oracles of deism."<sup>2</sup>

Woolston, who put his name to his books, after being arrested in May, 1728, and released on bail, was prosecuted in 1729 on the charge of blasphemy, in that he had derided the gospel miracles and represented Jesus alternately as an impostor, a sorcerer, and a magician. His friendly counsel ingeniously argued that Woolston had aimed at safeguarding Christianity by returning to the allegorical method of the early Fathers; and that he had shown his reverence for Jesus and religion by many specific expressions; but the jury took a simpler view, and, without leaving the court, found Woolston guilty. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £100, to suffer a year's imprisonment, and either to find surety for his future good conduct or pay or give sureties for £2,000.<sup>3</sup> He is commonly said to have paid the penalty of imprisonment for the rest of his life (d. 1733), being unable to pay the fine of £100; but Voltaire positively asserts that "nothing is more false" than the statement that he died in prison; adding: "Several of my friends have seen him in his house: he died there, at liberty."<sup>4</sup> The solution of the conflict seems to be that he lived in his own house "in the rules of" the King's Bench Prison—that is, in the precincts, and under technical supervision.<sup>5</sup> In any case, he was sentenced; and the punishment was the measure of the anger felt at the continuous advance of deistic opinions, or at least against hostile criticism of the Scriptures.

## § 3

Unitarianism, formerly a hated heresy, was now in comparison leniently treated, because of its deference to Scriptural authority,

<sup>1</sup> *A Layman's Faith*, . . . "By a Freethinker and a Christian," 1732.  
<sup>2</sup> Title-page of Rev. Elisha Smith's *Cure of Deism*, 1st ed. 1736; 3rd ed. 1740.  
<sup>3</sup> Le Moine, *Dissertation historique sur les écrits de Woolston, sa condamnation, etc.* pp. 29-31, cited by Salchi, *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 67 sq.  
<sup>4</sup> *Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*, as cited. Voltaire tells that, when a she-bigot one day spat in Woolston's face, he calmly remarked: "It was so that the Jews treated your God." Another story reads like a carefully-improved version of the foregoing. A woman is said to have accosted him as a scoundrel, and asked him why he was not yet hanged. On his asking her grounds for such an accost, she replied: "You have writ against my Saviour. What would become of my poor sinful soul if it was not for my dear Saviour—my Saviour who died for such wicked sinners as I am." *Life of Mr. Woolston*, prefixed to a reprint of his collected *Discourses*, 1733, p. 27. Cp. Salchi, p. 78.  
<sup>5</sup> Life cited, pp. 22, 26, 29.



Where the deists rejected all revelation, Unitarianism held by the Bible, calling only for a revision of the central Christian dogma. It had indeed gained much theological ground in the past quarter of a century. Nothing is more instructive in the culture-history of the period than the rapidity with which the Presbyterian succession of clergy passed from violent Calvinism, by way of "Baxterian" Arminianism, to Arianism, and thence in many cases to Unitarianism. First they virtually adopted the creed of the detested Laud, whom their fathers had hated for it; then they passed step by step to a heresy for which their fathers had slain men. A closely similar process took place in Geneva, where Servetus after death triumphed over his slayer.<sup>1</sup> In 1691, after a generation of common suffering, a precarious union was effected between the English Presbyterians, now mostly semi-Arminians, and the Independents, still mostly Calvinists: but in 1694 it was dissolved.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter the former body, largely endowed by the will of Lady Hewley in 1710, became as regards its Trust Deeds the freest of all the English sects in matters of doctrine.<sup>3</sup> The recognition of past changes had made their clergy chary of a rigid subscription. Naturally the movement did not gain in popularity as it fell away from fanaticism; but the decline of Nonconformity in the first half of the eighteenth century was common to all the sects, and did not specially affect the Presbyterians. Of the many "free" churches established in England and Wales after the Act of Toleration (1689), about half were extinct in 1715;<sup>4</sup> and of the Presbyterian churches the number in Yorkshire alone fell from fifty-nine in 1715 to a little over forty in 1730.<sup>5</sup> Economic causes were probably the main ones. The State-endowed parish priest had an enduring advantage over his rival. But the Hewley endowment gave a certain economic basis to the Presbyterians; and the concern for scholarship which had always marked their body kept them more open to intellectual influences than the ostensibly more free-minded and certainly more democratic sectaries of the Independent and Baptist bodies.<sup>6</sup>

The result was that, with free Trust Deeds, the Presbyterians

<sup>1</sup> *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations*, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, 1834, pp. 17, 35; *The History, Opinions, and present legal position of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, pp. 18, 29; Skeats, *History of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter, as cited, p. 17; *History of the Presbyterians*, as cited, p. 19; Fletcher, *History of Independency*, 1862, iv, 266-67.

<sup>3</sup> Skeats, as cited, p. 226.  
<sup>4</sup> Hunter, pp. 37, 39.  
<sup>5</sup> Hunter, pp. 24-25.  
<sup>6</sup> Skeats (pp. 239-40) sums up that while the Baptists had probably "never been entirely free from the taint" of Unitarianism, the Particular Baptists and the Congregationalists were saved from it by their lack of men of "eminently speculative mind"; while the Presbyterians "were men, for the most part, of larger reading than other Nonconformists, and the writings of Whiston and Clarke had found their way among them." But the tendency existed before Whiston and Clarke.

openly exhibited a tendency which was latent in all the other churches. In 1719, at a special assembly of Presbyterian ministers at Salters' Hall, it was decided by a majority of 73 to 69 that subscription to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity should no longer be demanded of candidates for the ministry.<sup>1</sup> Of the 73, the majority professed to be themselves orthodox; but there was no question that antitrinitarian opinions had become common, especially in Devonshire, where the heresy case of Mr. Peirce of Exeter had brought the matter to a crisis.<sup>2</sup> From this date "Arian" opinions spread more rapidly in the dwindling denomination, shading yet further into Unitarianism, step for step with the deistic movement in the Church. "In less than half a century the doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England."<sup>3</sup> "In the English Presbyterian ministry the process was from Arian opinions to those called Unitarian.....by a gradual sliding," even as the transition had been made from Calvinism to Arminianism in the previous century.<sup>4</sup>

Presbyterianism having thus come pretty much into line with Anglicanism on the old question of predestination, while still holding fast by Scriptural standards as against the deists, the old stress of Anglican dislike had slackened, despite the rise of the new heretical element. Unitarian arguments were now forthcoming from quarters not associated with dissent, as in the case of THOMAS CHUBB'S first treatise, *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted* (1715), courteously dedicated "To the Reverend the Clergy, and in particular to the Right Reverend Gilbert Lord Bishop of Sarum, our vigilant and laborious Diocesan." Chubb (1679-1747) had been trained to glove-making, and, as his opponents took care to record, acted also as a tallow-chandler;<sup>5</sup> and the good literary quality of his work made some sensation in an England which had not learned to think respectfully of Bunyan. Chubb's impulse to write had come from the perusal of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, in 1711, and that single-minded Arian published his book for him.

The Unitarians would naturally repudiate all connection with such a performance as *A Sober Reply to Mr. Higgs's Merry Arguments from the Light of Nature for the Tritheistic Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was condemned by the House of Lords on

<sup>1</sup> *History*, cited, p. 22; Hunter, pp. 44-45; Skeats, pp. 243-44.

<sup>2</sup> Skeats, pp. 240-43, 245 sq.

<sup>3</sup> As Sir Leslie Stephen has observed (*English Thought*, i, 164), Chubb "deserves the praise of Malthusians." Having a sufficiency of means for himself, but not more, he "lived a single life, judging it greatly improper to introduce a family into the world without a prospect of maintaining them." The proverb as to mouths and meat, he drily observes, had not been verified in his experience. (*The Author's Account of Himself*, pref. to *Posthumous Works*, 1748, i, p. iv.)



February 12, 1720, to be burnt, as having "in a daring, impious manner, ridiculed the doctrine of the Trinity and all revealed religion." Its author, Joseph Hall, a serjeant-at-arms to the King, seems to have undergone no punishment, and more decorous antitrinitarians received public countenance. Thus the Unitarian Edward Elwall,<sup>1</sup> who had published a book called *A True Testimony for God and his Sacred Law* (1724), for which he was prosecuted at Stafford in 1726, was allowed by the judge to argue his cause fully, and was unconditionally acquitted, to the displeasure of the clergy.

## § 4

Anti-scriptural writers could not hope for such toleration, being doubly odious to the Church. Berkeley, in 1721, had complained bitterly<sup>2</sup> of the general indifference to religion, which his writings had done nothing to alter; and in 1736 he angrily demanded that blasphemy should be punished like high treason.<sup>3</sup> His *Minute Philosopher* (1732) betrays throughout his angry consciousness of the vogue of freethinking after twenty years of resistance from his profession; and that performance is singularly ill fitted to alter the opinions of unbelievers. In his earlier papers attacking them he had put a stress of malice that, in a mind of his calibre, is startling even to the student of religious history.<sup>4</sup> It reveals him as no less possessed by the passion of creed than the most ignorant priest of his Church. For him all freethinkers were detested disturbers of his emotional life; and of the best of them, as Collins, Shaftesbury, and Spinoza, he speaks with positive fury. In the *Minute Philosopher*, half-conscious of the wrongness of his temper, he sets himself to make the unbelievers figure in dialogue as ignorant, pretentious, and coarse-natured; while his own mouthpieces are meant to be benign, urbane, wise, and persuasive. Yet in the very pages so planned he unwittingly reveals that the freethinkers whom he goes about to caricature were commonly good-natured in tone, while he becomes as virulent as ever in his eagerness to discredit them. Not a paragraph in the book attains to the spirit of judgment or fairness; all is special pleading, overstrained and embittered sarcasm, rankling animus. Gifted alike for literature and for philosophy, keen of vision in economic problems where the mass of men were short-sighted, he was flawed on the side of his faith by the hysteria to which it always

<sup>1</sup> One of the then numerous tribe of eccentrics. He held by Judaic Sabbatarianism, and affected a Rabbinical costume. He made a competence, however, as an ironmonger.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*.

<sup>3</sup> *Discourse to Magistrates*.

<sup>4</sup> *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 55, 88.

stirred him. No man was less qualified to write a well-balanced dialogue as between his own side and its opponents. To candour he never attains, unless it be in the sense that his passion recoils on his own case. Even while setting up ninepins of ill-put "infidel" argument to knock down, he elaborates futilities of rebuttal, indicating to every attentive reader the slightness of his rational basis.

On the strength of this performance he might fitly be termed the most ill-conditioned sophist of his age, were it not for the perception that religious feeling in him has become a pathological phase, and that he suffers incomparably more from his own passions than he can inflict on his enemies by his eager thrusts at them. More than almost any gifted pietist of modern times he sets us wondering at the power of creed in certain cases to overgrow judgment and turn to naught the rarest faculties. No man in Berkeley's day had a finer natural lucidity and suppleness of intelligence; yet perhaps no polemist on his side did less either to make converts or to establish a sound intellectual practice. Plain men on the freethinking side he must either have bewildered by his metaphysic or revolted by his spite; while to the more efficient minds he stood revealed as a kind of inspired child, rapt in the construction and manipulation of a set of brilliant sophisms which availed as much for any other creed as for his own. To the armoury of Christian apologetic now growing up in England he contributed a special form of the skeptical argument: freethinkers, he declared, made certain arbitrary or irrational assumptions in accepting Newton's doctrine of fluxions, and it was only their prejudice that prevented them from being similarly accommodating to Christian mysteries.<sup>1</sup> It is a kind of argument dear to minds pre-convinced and incapable of a logical revision, but worse than inept as against opponents; and it availed no more in Berkeley's hands than it had done in those of Huet.<sup>2</sup> To theosophy, indeed, Berkeley rendered a more successful service in presenting it with the no better formula of "existence [*i.e.*, in consciousness] dependent upon consciousness"—a verbalism which has served the purposes of theology in the philosophic schools down till our own day. For his, however, the popular polemic value of such a theorem must have been sufficiently countervailed by his vehement championship of the doctrine of passive obedience in its most extreme form—"that loyalty is a virtue or moral duty; and disloyalty or rebellion, in the most strict and proper sense, a vice or crime against the law of nature."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Analyst*, Queries, 55-67.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 126-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Discourse of Passive Obedience*, § 26.



It belonged to the overstrung temperament of Berkeley that, like a nervous artist, he should figure to himself all his freethinking antagonists as personally odious, himself growing odious under the obsession; and he solemnly asserts, in his *Discourse to Magistrates*, that there had been "lately set up within this city of Dublin" an "execrable fraternity of blasphemers," calling themselves "blasters," and forming "a distinct society, whereof the proper and avowed business shall be to shock all serious Christians by the most impious and horrid blasphemies, uttered in the most public manner."<sup>1</sup> There appears to be not a grain of truth in this astonishing assertion, to which no subsequent historian has paid the slightest attention. In a period in which freethinking books had been again and again burned in Dublin by the public hangman, such a society could be projected only in a nightmare; and Berkeley's hallucination may serve as a sign of the extent to which his judgment had been deranged by his passions.<sup>2</sup> His forensic temper is really on a level with that of the most incompetent swashbucklers on his side.

When educated Christians could be so habitually envenomed as was Berkeley, there was doubtless a measure of contrary heat among English unbelievers; but, apart altogether from what could be described as blasphemy, unbelief abounded in the most cultured society of the day. Bolingbroke's rationalism had been privately well known; and so distinguished a personage as the brilliant and scholarly Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, hated by Pope, is one of the reputed freethinkers of her time.<sup>3</sup> In the very year of the publication of Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, the first two epistles of the *Essay on Man* of his own friend and admirer, Pope, gave a new currency to the form of optimistic deism created by Shaftesbury, and later elaborated by Bolingbroke. Pope was always anxiously hostile in his allusions to the professed freethinkers<sup>4</sup>—among whom Bolingbroke only posthumously enrolled himself—and in private he specially aspersed Shaftesbury, from whom he had taken so much;<sup>5</sup> but his prudential tactic gave all

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, ed. 1837, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> See the whole context, which palpitates with excitement.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Walter Sichel (*Bolingbroke and his Times*, 1901, i, 175) thinks fit to dispose of her attitude as "her aversion to the Church and to everything that transcended her own faculties." So far as the evidence goes, her faculties were much superior to those of most of her orthodox contemporaries. For her tone see her letters.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g. Dunciad*, ii, 399; iii, 212; iv, 492.

<sup>5</sup> Voltaire commented pointedly on Pope's omission to make any reference to Shaftesbury, while vending his doctrine. (*Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.) As a matter of fact Pope does in the *Dunciad* (iv, 488) refer maliciously to the Theocles of Shaftesbury's *Moralists* as maintaining a Lucretian theism or virtual atheism. The explanation is that Shaftesbury had sharply criticized the political course of Bolingbroke, who in turn ignored him as a thinker. See the present writer's introd. to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900 (rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*); and cp. W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, p. 101.

the more currency to the virtual deism he enunciated. Given out without any critical allusion to Christianity, and put forward as a vindication of the ways of God to men, it gave to heresy, albeit in a philosophically incoherent exposition, the status of a well-bred piety. A good authority pronounces that "the *Essay on Man* did more to spread English deism in France than all the works of Shaftesbury";<sup>1</sup> and we have explicit testimony that the poet privately avowed the deistic view of things.<sup>2</sup>

The line of the *Essay* which now reads:

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
originally ran "at home"; but, says Warton, "this expression seeming to exclude a future existence, as, to speak the plain truth, it was intended to do, it was altered"—presumably by Warburton. (Warton's *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 67.) The Spinozistic or pantheistic character of much of the *Essay on Man* was noted by various critics, in particular by the French Academician De Crousaz (*Examen de l'Essay de M. Pope sur l'Homme*, 1748, p. 90, etc.) After promising to justify the ways of God to man, writes Crousaz (p. 33), Pope turns round and justifies man, leaving God charged with all men's sins. When the younger Racine, writing to the Chevalier Ramsay in 1742, charged the *Essay* with irreligion, Pope wrote him repudiating alike Spinoza and Leibnitz. (Warton, ii, 121.) In 1755, however, the Abbé Gauchat renewed the attack, declaring that the *Essay* was "neither Christian nor philosophic" (*Lettres Critiques*, i, 346). Warburton at first charged the poem with rank atheism, and afterwards vindicated it in his manner. (Warton, i, 125.) But in Germany, in the youth of Goethe, we find the *Essay* regarded by Christians as an unequivocally deistic poem. (Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. II, B. vii: *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 263.) And by a modern Christian polemist the *Essay* is described as "the best positive result of English deism in the eighteenth century" (Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 31).

In point of fact, deism was the fashionable way of thinking among cultured people. Though Voltaire testifies from personal knowledge that there were in England in his day many principled atheists,<sup>3</sup> there was little overt atheism,<sup>4</sup> whether by reason of the special

<sup>1</sup> Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature*, Eng. tr. pp. 117-18.

<sup>2</sup> Chesterfield in his *Characters* (app. to the *Letters*) testifies that Pope "was a deist believing in a future state; this he has often owned himself to me." (Bradshaw's ed. of *Letters*, iii, 1410.) Chesterfield makes a similar statement concerning Queen Caroline:—"After puzzling herself in all the whimsies and fantastical speculations of different sects, she fixed herself ultimately in Deism, believing in a future state." (*Id.* p. 1406.)

<sup>3</sup> *Dict. Philos. art.* ATHEË, § 2.

<sup>4</sup> Wise, in his adaptation of Cudworth, *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism* (1706), writes (i. 5) that "the philosophical atheists are but few in number," and their objections so weak "as that they deserve not a hearing but rather neglect"; but confusedly goes on to admit that "one or two broachers of 'em may be thought able to infect a whole nation, as.....sad experience tells us."



odium attaching to that way of thought, or of a real production of theistic belief by the concurrence of the deistic propaganda on this head with that of the clergy, themselves in so many cases deists.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to the *History of his Own Time*, pronounces that "there are few atheists, but many infidels, who are indeed very little better than the atheists." Collins observed that nobody had doubted the existence of God until the Boyle lecturers began to prove it; and Clarke had more than justified the jest by arguing, in his Boyle Lectures for 1705, that all deism logically leads to atheism. But though the apologists roused much discussion on the theistic issue, the stress of the apologetic literature passed from the theme of atheism to that of deism. Shaftesbury's early *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* had assumed the existence of a good deal of atheism; but his later writings, and those of his school, do not indicate much atheistic opposition.<sup>2</sup> Even the revived discussion on the immateriality and immortality of the soul—which began with the *Grand Essay* of Dr. William Coward,<sup>3</sup> in 1704, and was taken up, as we have seen, by the non-juror Dodwell<sup>4</sup>—was conducted on either orthodox or deistic lines. Coward wrote as a professed Christian,<sup>5</sup> to maintain, "against impostures of philosophy," that "matter and motion must be the foundation of thought in men and brutes." Collins maintained against Clarke the proposition that matter is capable of thought; and SAMUEL STRUTT ("of the Temple"), whose *Philosophical Inquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions, and the Immediate Cause of Thinking* (1732), is a most tersely cogent sequence of materialistic argument, never raises any question of deity. The result was that the problem of "materialism" was virtually dropped, Strutt's essay in particular passing into general oblivion.

It was replied to, however, with the *Inquiry* of Collins, as late as 1760, by a Christian controversialist who admits Strutt

<sup>1</sup> Complaint to this effect was made by orthodox writers. The Scotch Professor Halyburton, for instance, complains that in many sermons in his day "Heathen Morality has been substituted in the room of Gospel Holiness. And Ethicks by some have been preached instead of the Gospels of Christ." *Natural Religion Insufficient* (Edinburgh), 1714, p. 25. Cp. pp. 23, 26-27, 59, etc. Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to his *History of his Own Time*, declares, "I must own that the main body of our clergy has always seemed dead and lifeless to me," and ascribes much more zeal to Catholics and dissenters. (Ed. 1838, pp. 907-910.)

<sup>2</sup> The *Moralists* deals rather with strict skepticism than with substantive atheism.

<sup>3</sup> The *Grand Essay: or, a Vindication of Reason and Religion against Impostures of Philosophy*. The book was, on March 18, 1704, condemned by the House of Commons to be burned in Palace Yard, along with its author's *Second Thoughts Concerning the Human Soul* (1702). A second ed. of the latter appeared soon after. <sup>4</sup> Above, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Herbert Paul, in his essay on Swift (*Men and Letters*, 1901, p. 267), lumps as deists the four writers named by Swift in his *Argument*. Not having read them, he thinks fit to asperse all four as bad writers. Asgill, as was noted by Coleridge (*Table Talk*, July 30, 1831; April 30, 1832), was one of the best writers of his time. He was, in fact, a master of the staccato style, practised by Mr. Paul with less success.

to have been "a gentleman of an excellent genius for philosophical inquiries, and a close reasoner from those principles he laid down" (*An Essay towards demonstrating the Immateriality and Free Agency of the Soul*, 1760, p. 94). The Rev. Mr. Monk, in his *Life of Bentley* (2nd ed. 1833, ii, 391), absurdly speaks of Strutt as having "dressed up the arguments of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and other enemies of religion in a new shape." The reverend gentleman cannot have paid any attention to the arguments either of Herbert or of Strutt, which have no more in common than those of Toland and Hume. Strutt's book was much too closely reasoned to be popular. His name was for the time, however, associated with a famous scandal at Cambridge University. When in 1739 proceedings were taken against what was described as an "atheistical society" there, Strutt was spoken of as its "oracle." One of the members was Paul Whitehead, satirized by Pope. Another, Tinkler Duckett, a Fellow of Caius College, in holy orders, was prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court on the twofold charge of proselytizing for atheism and of attempting to seduce a "female." In his defence he explained that he had been for some time "once more a believer in God and Christianity"; but was nevertheless expelled. See Monk's *Life of Bentley*, as cited, ii, 391 sq.

## § 5

No less marked is the failure to develop the "higher criticism" from the notable start made in 1739 in the very remarkable *Inquiry into the Jewish and Christian Revelations* by Samuel Parvish, who made the vital discovery that Deuteronomy is a product of the seventh century B.C.<sup>1</sup> His book, which is in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Japanese, went into a second edition (1746); but his idea struck too deep for the critical faculty of that age, and not till the nineteenth century was the clue found again by De Wette, in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Parvish came at the end of the main deistic movement,<sup>3</sup> and by that time the more open-minded men had come to a point of view from which it did not greatly matter when Deuteronomy was written, or precisely how a cultus was built up; while orthodoxy could not dream of abandoning its view of inspiration. There was thus an arrest alike of historical criticism and of the higher philosophic thought under the stress of the concrete disputes over ethics, miracles, prophecy, and politics; and

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, p. 324. The book is now rare.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Cheyne expresses surprise that a "theological writer" who got so far should not have been "prompted by his good genius to follow up his advantage." It is, however, rather remarkable that Parvish, who was a bookseller at Guildford (Alberti, *Briefe*, p. 426), should have achieved what he did. It was through not being a theological writer that he went so far, no theologian of his day following him.



a habit of taking deity for granted became normal, with the result that when the weak point was pressed upon by Law and Butler there was a sense of blankness on both sides. But among men theistically inclined, the argument of Tindal against revelationism was extremely telling, and it had more literary impressiveness than any writing on the orthodox side before Butler. By this time the philosophic influence of Spinoza—seen as early as 1699 in Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*,<sup>1</sup> and avowed by Clarke when he addressed his *Demonstration* (1705) "more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their followers"—had spread among the studious class, greatly reinforcing the deistic movement; so that in 1732 Berkeley, who ranked him among "weak and wicked writers," described him as "the great leader of our modern infidels."

See the *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vii, § 29. Similarly Leland, in the *Supplement* (1756) to his *View of the Deistical Writers* (afterwards incorporated as Letter VI), speaks of Spinoza as "the most applauded doctor of modern atheism." Sir Leslie Stephen's opinion (*English Thought*, i, 33), that "few of the deists, probably," read Spinoza, seems to be thus outweighed. If they did not in great numbers read the *Ethica*, they certainly read the *Tractatus* and the letters. As early as 1677 we find Stillingfleet, in the preface to his *Letter to a Deist*, speaking of Spinoza as "a late author [who] I hear is mightily in vogue among many who cry up anything on the atheistical side, though never so weak and trifling"; and further of a mooted proposal to translate the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* into English. A translation was published in 1689. In 1685 the Scotch Professor George Sinclair, in the "Preface to the Reader" of his *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, writes that "There are a monstrous rabble of men, who following the *Hobbesian* and *Spinosian* principles, slight religion and undervalue the Scripture," etc. In Gildon's work of recantation, *The Deist's Manual* (1705, p. 192), the indifferent Pleonexos, who "took more delight in bags than in books," and demurs to accumulating the latter, avows that he has a few, among them being Hobbes and Spinoza. Evelyn, writing about 1680-90, speaks of "that infamous book, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*," as "a wretched obstacle to the searchers of holy truth" (*The History of Religion*, 1850, p. xxvii). Cp. Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, Edinburgh, 1714, p. 31, as to the "great vogue among our young Gentry and Students" of Hobbes, Spinoza, and others.

<sup>1</sup> See the author's introduction to ed. of the *Characteristics*, 1900, rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*.

## § 6

Among the deists of the upper classes was the young William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, if, as has been alleged, it was he who in 1733, two years before he entered Parliament, contributed to the *London Journal* a "Letter on Superstition," the work of a pronounced freethinker.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, such deistic writing as that with which Chubb, in a multitude of tracts, followed up his early Unitarian essay of 1715, brought an ethical "Christian rationalism" within the range of the unscholarly many. THOMAS MORGAN (d. 1741), a physician, began in the *Moral Philosopher*, 1739-1740,<sup>2</sup> to sketch a rationalistic theory of Christian origins, besides putting the critical case with new completeness. Morgan had been at one time a dissenting minister at Frome, Somerset, and had been dismissed because of his deistical opinions. Towards the Jehovah and the ethic of the Old Testament he holds, however, the attitude rather of an ancient Gnostic than of a modern rationalist; and in his philosophy he is either a very "godly" deist or a pantheist miscarried.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time PETER ANNET (1693-1769), a schoolmaster and inventor of a system of shorthand, widened the propaganda in other directions. He seems to have been the first freethought lecturer, for his first pamphlet, *Judging for Ourselves: or, Free-thinking the Great Duty of Religion*, "By P. A., Minister of the Gospel" (1739), consists of "Two Lectures delivered at Plaisterers' Hall." Through all his propaganda, of which the more notable portions are his *Supernaturals Examined* and a series of controversies on the Resurrection, there runs a train of shrewd critical sense, put forth in crisp and vivacious English, which made him a popular force. What he lacked was the due gravity and dignity for the handling of such a theme as the reversal of a nation's faith. Like Woolston, he is facetious where he should be serious; entertaining where he had need be impressive; provocative where he should have aimed at persuasion. We cannot say what types he influenced, or how deep his influence went: it appears only that he swayed many whose suffrages weighed little. At length, when in 1761 he issued nine numbers of *The Free Inquirer*, in which he attacked the Pentateuch with much insight and cogency, but with a certain

<sup>1</sup> The question remains obscure. Cp. the Letter cited, reprinted at end of Carver's 1830 ed. of Paine's Works (New York); F. Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii, 405; and Chatham's "scalping-knife" speech.

<sup>2</sup> A *Vindication of the Moral Philosopher* appeared in 1741.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Lechler, pp. 371, 386.



want of rational balance (shown also in his treatise, *Social Bliss Considered*, 1749), he was made a victim of the then strengthened spirit of persecution, being sentenced to stand thrice in the pillory with the label "For Blasphemy," and to suffer a year's hard labour. Nevertheless, he was popular enough to start a school on his release.

Such popularity, of course, was alien to the literary and social traditions of the century; and from the literary point of view the main line of deistic propaganda, as apart from the essays and treatises of Hume and the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, ends with the younger HENRY DODWELL'S (anonymous) ironical essay, *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (1741). So rigorously congruous is the reasoning of that brilliant treatise that some have not quite unjustifiably taken it for the work of a dogmatic believer, standing at some such position as that taken up before him by Huet, and in recent times by Cardinal Newman.<sup>1</sup> He argues, for instance, not merely that reason can yield none of the confidence which belongs to true faith, but that it cannot duly strengthen the moral will against temptations.<sup>2</sup> But the book at once elicited a number of replies, all treating it unhesitatingly as an anti-Christian work; and Leland assails it as bitterly as he does any openly freethinking treatise.<sup>3</sup> Its thesis might have been seriously supported by reference to the intellectual history of the preceding thirty years, wherein much argument had certainly failed to establish the reigning creed or to discredit the unbelievers.

## § 7

Of the work done by English deism thus far, it may suffice to say that within two generations it had more profoundly altered the intellectual temper of educated men than any religious movement had ever done in the same time. This appears above all from the literature produced by orthodoxy in reply, where the mere defensive resort to reasoning, apart from the accounts of current rationalism, outgoes anything in the previous history of literature. The whole evolution is a remarkable instance of the effect on intellectual progress of the diversion of a nation's general energy from war and intense political faction to mental activities. A similar diversion had taken place at the Restoration, to be followed by a return to civil and foreign strife, which arrested it. It was in the closing years of Anne, and in the steady *régime* of Walpole under the first two Georges, that the ferment worked at its height. Collins's

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. 1741, p. 30 sq. <sup>3</sup> *View of the Deistical Writers*, Letter XI (X in 1st ed.).

*Discourse of Freethinking* was synchronous with the Peace of Utrecht: the era of war re-opened in 1739, much against the will of Walpole, who resigned in 1742. Home and foreign wars thereafter became common; and in 1751 Clive opened the period of imperialistic expansion, determining national developments on that main line, concurrently with that of the new industry. Could the discussion have been continuous—could England have remained what she was in the main deistic period, a workshop of investigation and a battleground of ideas—all European development might have been indefinitely hastened. But the deists, for the most part educated men appealing to educated men or to the shrewdest readers among the artisans, had not learned to reckon with the greater social forces; and beyond a certain point they could not affect England's intellectual destinies.

It is worse than idle to argue that "the true cause of the decay of deism is to be sought in its internal weakness," in the sense that "it was not rooted in the deepest convictions, nor associated with the most powerful emotions of its adherents."<sup>1</sup> No such charge can be even partially proved. The deists were at least as much in earnest as two-thirds of the clergy: the determining difference, in this regard, was the economic basis of the latter, and their social hold of an ignorant population. The clergy, who could not argue the deists down in the court of culture, had in their own jurisdiction the great mass of the uneducated lower classes, and the great mass of the women of all classes, whom the ideals of the age kept uneducated, with a difference. And while the more cultured clergy were themselves in large measure deists, the majority, in the country parishes, remained uncritical and unreflective, caring little even to cultivate belief among their flocks. The "contempt of the clergy" which had subsisted from the middle of the seventeenth century (if, indeed, it should not be dated from the middle of the sixteenth) meant among other things that popular culture remained on a lower plane. With the multitude remaining a ready hotbed for new "enthusiasm," and the women of the middle and upper orders no less ready nurturers of new generations of young believers, the work of emancipation was but begun when deism was made "fashionable." And with England on the way to a new era at once of industrial and imperial expansion, in which the energies that for a generation had made her a leader of European thought were diverted to arms and to commerce, the critical and rationalizing work of the deistical generation could not go on as

<sup>1</sup> Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought*, i, 169.



it had begun. That generation left its specific mark on the statute-book in a complete repeal of the old laws relating to witchcraft;<sup>1</sup> on literature in a whole library of propaganda and apology; on moral and historic science in a new movement of humanism, which was to find its check in the French Revolution.

How it affected the general intelligence for good may be partly gathered from a comparison of the common English political attitudes towards Ireland in the first and the last quarters of the century. Under William was wrought the arrest of Irish industry and commerce, begun after the Restoration; under Anne were enacted the penal laws against Catholics—as signal an example of religious iniquity as can well be found in all history. By the middle of the century these laws had become anachronisms for all save bigots.

"The wave of freethought that was spreading over Europe and permeating its literature had not failed to affect Ireland. ....An atmosphere of skepticism was fatal to the Penal Code. What element of religious persecution there had been in it had long ceased to be operative" (R. Dunlop, in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* vi, 489). Macaulay's testimony on this head is noteworthy: "The philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism of the deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the Puritanism of the eighteenth century" (*History*, ch. xvii, end).

The denunciations of the penal laws by Arthur Young in 1780<sup>2</sup> are the outcome of two generations of deistic thinking; the spirit of religion has been ousted by judgment.<sup>3</sup> Could that spirit have had freer play, less hindrance from blind passion, later history would have been a happier record. But for reasons lying in the environment as well as in its own standpoint, deism was not destined to rise on continuous stepping-stones to social dominion.

Currency has been given to a misconception of intellectual history by the authoritative statement that in the deistic controversy "all that was intellectually venerable in England" appeared "on the side of Christianity" (Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, 86). The same thing, in effect, is said by Lecky: "It was to repel these [deistic] attacks ['upon the miracles'] that the evidential school arose, and the annals of religious controversy narrate few more complete victories than they achieved" (*Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, pop. ed. i, 175). The proposition seems to be an echo of orthodox

<sup>1</sup> Act 9th, Geo. II (1736), ch. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *A Tour in Ireland*, ed. 1892, ii, 59-72.

<sup>3</sup> Young at this period was entirely secular in his thinking. Telling of his recovery from a fever in 1790, he writes: "I fear that not one thought of God ever occurred to me at that time" (*Autobiography*, 1898, p. 188). Afterwards he fell into religious melancholia (Introd. note of editor).

historiography, as Buckle had before written in his note-book: "In England skepticism made no head. Such men as Toland and Tindal, Collins, Shaftesbury, Woolston, were no match for Clarke, Warburton, and Lardner. They could make no head till the time of Middleton" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 321)—a strain of assertion which clearly proceeds on no close study of the period. In the first place, all the writing on the freethinking side was done under peril of Blasphemy Laws, and under menace of all the calumny and ostracism that in Christian society follow on advanced heresy; while the orthodox side could draw on the entire clerical profession, over ten thousand strong, and trained for and pledged to defence of the faith. Yet, when all is said, the ordinary list of deists amply suffices to disprove Sir L. Stephen's phrase. His "intellectually venerable" list runs: Bentley, Locke, Berkeley, Clarke, Butler, Waterland, Warburton, Sherlock, Gibson, Conybeare, Smalbroke, Leslie, Law, Leland, Lardner, Foster, Doddridge, Lyttelton, Barrington, Addison, Pope, Swift. He might have added Newton and Boyle. Sykes,<sup>1</sup> Balguy, Stebbing, and a "host of others," he declares to be "now for the most part as much forgotten as their victims"; Young and Blackmore he admits to be in similar case. It is expressly told of Doddridge, he might have added, that whereas that well-meaning apologist put before his students at Northampton the ablest writings both for and against Christianity, leaving them to draw their own conclusions, many of his pupils, "on leaving his institution, became confirmed Arians and Socinians" (Nichols in App. P to Life of Arminius—*Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 223-25). This hardly spells success.<sup>2</sup> All told, the list includes only three or four men of any permanent interest as thinkers, apart from Newton; and only three or four more important as writers. The description of Waterland,<sup>3</sup> Warburton,<sup>4</sup> Smalbroke,<sup>5</sup> Sherlock, Leslie, and half-a-dozen more as "intellectually venerable" is grotesque; even Bentley is a strange subject for veneration.

On the other hand, the list of "the despised deists," who "make but a poor show when compared with this imposing list," runs thus: Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Halley (well known to be an unbeliever, though he did not write on the subject),

<sup>1</sup> Really an abler man than half the others in the list, but himself a good deal of a heretic. So far from attempting to make "victims," he pleaded for a more candid treatment of deistic objections.

<sup>2</sup> Doddridge himself was not theologically orthodox, but was an evangelical Christian. Dr. Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, 1878, i, 344-46.

<sup>3</sup> Whose doctrine Sir Leslie Stephen elsewhere (p. 258) calls a "brutal theology which gloried in trampling on the best instincts of its opponents," and a "most unlovely product of eighteenth-century speculation."

<sup>4</sup> Of Warburton Sir Leslie writes elsewhere (p. 353) that "this colossus was built up of rubbish." See p. 352 for samples. Again he speaks (p. 368) of the bishop's pretensions as "colossal impudence." It should be noted, further, that Warburton's teaching in the *Divine Legation* was a gross heresy in the eyes of William Law, who in his *Short but Sufficient Confutation* pronounced its main thesis a "most horrible doctrine." Ed. 1768, as cited, i, 217.

<sup>5</sup> As to whose "senile incompetence" see same vol. p. 234.



Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Mandeville, Tindal, Chubb, Morgan, Dodwell, Middleton, Hume, Bolingbroke, Gibbon. It would be interesting to know on what principles this group is excluded from the intellectual veneration so liberally allotted to the other. It is nothing to the purpose that Shaftesbury and Mandeville wrote "covertly" and "indirectly." The law and the conditions compelled them to do so. It is still more beside the case to say that "Hume can scarcely be reckoned among the deists. He is already [when?] emerging into a higher atmosphere." Hume wrote explicitly as a deist; and only in his posthumous Dialogues did he pass on to the atheistic position. At no time, moreover, was he "on the side of Christianity." On the other hand, Locke and Clarke and Pope were clearly "emerging into a higher atmosphere" than Christianity, since Locke is commonly reckoned by the culture-historians, and even by Sir Leslie Stephen, as making for deism; Pope was the pupil of Bolingbroke, and wrote as such; and Clarke was shunned as an Arian. Newton, again, was a Unitarian, and Leibnitz accused his system of making for irreligion. It would be hard to show, further, who are the "forgotten victims" of Balguy and the rest. Balguy criticized Shaftesbury, whose name is still a good deal better known than Balguy's. The main line of deists is pretty well remembered. And if we pair off Hume against Berkeley, Hobbes against Locke, Middleton (as historical critic) against Bentley, Shaftesbury against Addison, Mandeville against Swift, Bolingbroke against Butler, Collins against Clarke, Herbert against Lyttelton, Tindal against Waterland, and Gibbon against—shall we say?—Warburton, it hardly appears that the overplus of merit goes as Sir Leslie Stephen alleges, even if we leave Newton, with brain unhinged, standing against Halley. The statement that the deists "are but a ragged regiment," and that "in speculative ability most of them were children by the side of their ablest antagonists," is simply unintelligible unless the names of all the ablest deists are left out. Locke, be it remembered, did not live to meet the main deistic attack on Christianity; and Sir Leslie admits the weakness of his pro-Christian performance.

The bases of Sir Leslie Stephen's verdict may be tested by his remarks that "Collins, a respectable country gentleman, showed considerable acuteness; Toland, a poor denizen of Grub Street, and Tindal, a Fellow of All Souls, made a certain display of learning, and succeeded in planting some effective arguments." Elsewhere (pp. 217-227) Sir Leslie admits that Collins had the best of the argument against his "venerable" opponents on Prophecy; and Huxley credits him with equal success in the argument with Clarke. The work of Collins on *Human Liberty*, praised by a long series of students and experts, and entirely above the capacity of Bentley, is philosophically as durable as any portion of Locke, who made Collins his chosen friend and

trustee, and who did not live to meet his anti-Biblical arguments. Tindal, who had also won Locke's high praise by his political essays, profoundly influenced such a student as Laukhard (Lechler, p. 451). And Toland, whom even Mr. A. S. Farrar (Bampton Lectures, p. 179) admitted to possess "much originality and learning," has struck Lange as a notable thinker, though he *was* a poor man. Leibnitz, who answered him, praises his acuteness, as does Pusey, who further admits the uncommon ability of Morgan and Collins (*Histor. Enq. into German Rationalism*, 1828, p. 126). It is time that the conventional English standards in these matters should be abandoned by modern rationalists.

The unfortunate effect of Sir Leslie Stephen's dictum is seen in the assertion of Prof. Höffding (*Hist. of Modern Philos.* Eng. tr. 1900, i, 403), that Sir Leslie "rightly remarks of the English deists that they were altogether inferior to their adversaries"; and further (p. 405), that by the later deists, "Collins, Tindal, Morgan, etc., the dispute as to miracles was carried on with great violence." It is here evident that Prof. Höffding has not read the writers he depreciates, for those he names were far from being violent. Had he known the literature, he would have named Woolston, not Collins and Tindal and Morgan. He is merely echoing, without inquiring for himself, a judgment which he regards as authoritative. In the same passage he declares that "only one of all the men formerly known as the 'English deists' [Toland] has rendered contributions of any value to the history of thought." If this is said with a knowledge of the works of Collins, Shaftesbury, and Mandeville, it argues a sad lack of critical judgment. But there is reason to infer here also that Prof. Höffding writes in ignorance of the literature he discusses.

While some professed rationalists thus belittle a series of pioneers who did so much to make later rationalism possible, some eminent theologians do them justice. Thus does Prof. Cheyne begin his series of lectures on *Founders of Old Testament Criticism* (1893): "A well-known and honoured representative of progressive German orthodoxy (J. A. Dorner) has set a fine example of historical candour by admitting the obligations of his country to a much-disliked form of English heterodoxy. He says that English deism, which found so many apt disciples in Germany, 'by clearing away dead matter, prepared the way for a reconstruction of theology from the very depths of the heart's beliefs, and also subjected man's nature to stricter observation.'<sup>1</sup> This, however, as it appears to me, is a very inadequate description of the facts. It was not merely a new

<sup>1</sup> *History of Protestant Theology*, Eng. tr. ii, 77. For the influence of deism on Germany, see Tholuck (*Vermischte Schriften*, Bd. ii) and Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*).—Note by Dr. Cheyne.



constructive stage of German theoretic theology, and a keener psychological investigation, for which deism helped to prepare the way, but also a great movement, which has in our own day become in a strict sense international, concerned with the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures. Beyond all doubt, the Biblical discussions which abound in the works of the deists and their opponents contributed in no slight degree to the development of that semi-apologetic criticism of the Old Testament of which J. D. Michaelis, and in some degree even Eichhorn, were leading representatives.....It is indeed singular that deism should have passed away in England without having produced a great critical movement among ourselves." Not quite so singular, perhaps, when we note that in our own day Sir Leslie Stephen and Lecky and Prof. Höffding could sum up the work of the deists without a glance at what it meant for Biblical criticism.

## § 8

If we were to set up a theory of intellectual possibilities from what has actually taken place in the history of thought, and without regard to the economic and political conditions above mentioned, we might reason that deism failed permanently to overthrow the current creed because it was not properly preceded by discipline in natural science. There might well be stagnation in the higher criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures when all natural science was still coloured by them. In nothing, perhaps, is the danger of Sacred Books more fully exemplified than in their influence for the suppression of true scientific thought. A hundredfold more potently than the faiths of ancient Greece has that of Christendom blocked the way to all intellectually vital discovery. If even the fame and the pietism of Newton could not save him from the charge of promoting atheism, much less could obscure men hope to set up any view of natural things which clashed with pulpit prejudice. But the harm lay deeper, inasmuch as the ground was preoccupied by pseudo-scientific theories which were at best fanciful modifications of the myths of Genesis. Types of these performances are the treatise of Sir Matthew Hale on *The Primitive Origination of Mankind* (1685); Dr. Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680-1689); and Whiston's *New Theory of the Earth* (1696)—all devoid of scientific value; Hale's work being pre-Newtonian; Burnet's anti-Newtonian, though partly critical as regards the sources of the Pentateuch; and Whiston's a combination of Newton and myth with his own quaint speculations. Even the *Natural History of the Earth* of Prof. John Woodward (1695), after

recognizing that fossils were really prehistoric remains, decided that they were deposited by the Deluge.<sup>1</sup>

Woodward's book is in its own way instructive as regards the history of opinion. A "Professor of Physick" in Gresham College, F.C.P., and F.R.S., he goes about his work in a methodical and ostensibly scientific fashion, colligates the phenomena, examines temperately the hypotheses of the many previous inquirers, and shows no violence of orthodox prepossession. He claims to have considered Moses "only as an historian," and to give him credit finally because he finds his narrative "punctually true."<sup>2</sup> He had before him an abundance of facts irreconcilable with the explanation offered by the Flood story; yet he actually adds to that myth a thesis of universal decomposition and dissolution of the earth's strata by the flood's action<sup>3</sup>—a hypothesis far more extravagant than any of those he dismissed. With all his method and scrutiny he had remained possessed by the tradition, and could not cast it off. It would seem as if such a book, reducing the tradition to an absurdity, was bound at least to put its more thoughtful readers on the right track. But the legend remained in possession of the general intelligence as of Woodward's; and beyond his standpoint science made little advance for many years. Moral and historical criticism, then, as regards some main issues, had gone further than scientific; and men's thinking on certain problems of cosmic philosophy was thus arrested for lack of due basis or discipline in experiential science.

The final account of the arrest of exact Biblical criticism in the eighteenth century, however, is that which explains also the arrest of the sciences. English energy, broadly speaking, was diverted into other channels. In the age of Chatham it became more and more military and industrial, imperialist and commercial; and the scientific work of Newton was considerably less developed by English hands than was the critical work of the first deists. Long before the French Revolution, mathematical and astronomical science were being advanced by French minds, the English doing nothing. Lagrange and Euler, Clairaut and D'Alembert, carried on the task, till Laplace consummated it in his great theory, which is to Newton's what Newton's was to that of Copernicus. It was Frenchmen, freethinkers to a man, who built up the new astronomy, while England was producing only eulogies of Newton's greatness. "No British name is ever mentioned in the list of mathematicians

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth*, 3rd ed. 1723, pref. and pp. 16 sq., 77 sq. Cp. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 227.

<sup>2</sup> End of pref.

<sup>3</sup> Work cited, p. 85.



who followed Newton in his brilliant career and completed the magnificent edifice of which he laid the foundation."<sup>1</sup> "Scotland contributed her Maclaurin, but England no European name."<sup>2</sup> Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century "there was hardly an individual in this country who possessed an intimate acquaintance with the methods of investigation which had conducted the foreign mathematicians to so many sublime results."<sup>3</sup> "The English mathematicians seem to have been so dazzled with the splendour of Newton's discoveries that they never conceived them capable of being extended or improved upon";<sup>4</sup> and Newton's name was all the while vaunted, unwarrantably enough, as being on the side of Christian orthodoxy. Halley's great hypothesis of the motion of the solar system in space, put forward in 1718, borne out by Cassini and Le Monnier, was left to be established by Mayer of Göttingen.<sup>5</sup> There was nothing specially incidental to deism, then, in the non-development of the higher criticism in England after Collins and Parvish, or in the lull of critical speculation in the latter half of the century. It was part of a general social readjustment in which English attention was turned from the mental life to the physical, from intension of thought to extension of empire.

Playfair (as cited, p. 39; Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, i, 348, note) puts forward the theory that the progress of the higher science in France was due to the "small pensions and great honours" bestowed on scientific men by the Academy of Sciences. The lack of such an institution in England he traces to "mercantile prejudices," without explaining these in their turn. They are to be understood as the consequences of the special expansion of commercial and industrial life in England in the eighteenth century, when France, on the contrary, losing India and North America, had her energies in a proportional degree thrown back on the life of the mind. French freethought, it will be observed, expanded *with* science, while in England there occurred, not a spontaneous reversion to orthodoxy any more than a surrender of the doctrine of Newton, but a general turning of attention in other directions. It is significant that the most important names in the literature of deism after 1740 are those of Hume and Smith, late products of the intellectual atmosphere of pre-industrial Scotland; of Bolingbroke, an aristocrat of the deistic generation, long an exile in France, who left his works to be published after his death; and of Gibbon, who also breathed the intellectual air of France.

<sup>1</sup> Playfair, in the *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1808, cited by Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, i, 347.

<sup>2</sup> Brewster, as last cited.

<sup>3</sup> Grant, *History of Physical Astronomy*, 1852, p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 363.

<sup>5</sup> Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 111.

## § 9

It has been commonly assumed that after Chubb and Morgan the deistic movement in England "decayed," or "passed into skepticism" with Hume; and that the decay was mainly owing to the persuasive effect of Bishop Butler's *Analogy* (1736).<sup>1</sup> This appears to be a complete misconception, arising out of the habit of looking to the mere succession of books without considering their vogue and the accompanying social conditions. Butler's book had very little influence till long after his death,<sup>2</sup> being indeed very ill-fitted to turn contemporary deists to Christianity. It does but develop one form of the skeptical argument for faith, as Berkeley had developed another; and that form of reasoning never does attain to anything better than a success of despair. The main argument being that natural religion is open to the same objections as revealed, on the score (1) of the inconsistency of Nature with divine benevolence, and (2) that we must be guided in opinion as in conduct by probability, a Mohammedan could as well use the theorem for the Koran as could a Christian for the Bible; and the argument against the justice of Nature tended logically to atheism. But the deists had left to them the resource of our modern theists—that of surmising a beneficence above human comprehension; and it is clear that if Butler made any converts they must have been of a very unenthusiastic kind. It is therefore safe to say with Pattison that "To whatever causes is to be attributed the decline of deism from 1750 onwards, the books polemically written against it cannot be reckoned among them."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, even deists who were affected by the plea that the Bible need not be more consistent and satisfactory than Nature, could find refuge in Unitarianism, a creed which, as industriously propounded by Priestley<sup>4</sup> towards the end of the century, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. The argument of William Law,<sup>5</sup> again, which insisted on the irreconcilability of the course of things with human reason, and called for

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, ii, 281; Lechler, p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> See details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Essay on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England: 1688-1750," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> In criticizing whom Sir Leslie Stephen barely notices his scientific work, but dwells much on his religious fallacies—a course which would make short work of the fame of Newton.

<sup>5</sup> In his *Case of Reason; or, Natural Religion Fully and Fairly Stated*, in answer to Tindal (1732). See the argument set forth by Sir Leslie Stephen, i, 158-63. It is noteworthy, however, that in his *Spirit of Prayer* (1750), pt. ii, dial. i, Law expressly argues that "No other religion can be right but that which has its foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his creatures but what the state of their nature calls them to." Like Baxter, Berkeley, Butler, and so many other orthodox polemicists, Law uses the argument from ignorance when it suits him, and ignores or rejects it when used by others.



an abject submission to revelation, could appeal only to minds already thus prostrate. Both his and Butler's methods, in fact, prepared the way for HUME. And in the year 1741, five years after the issue of the *Analogy* and seven before the issue of Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, we find the thesis of that essay tersely affirmed in a note to Book II of an anonymous translation (ascribed to T. FRANCKLIN) of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*.

The passage is worth comparing with Hume: "Hence we see what little credit ought to be paid to facts said to be done out of the ordinary course of nature. These miracles [cutting the whetstone, etc., related by Cicero, *De Div.* i, c. xvii] are well attested. They were recorded in the annals of a great people, believed by many learned and otherwise sagacious persons, and received as religious truths by the populace; but the testimonies of ancient records, the credulity of some learned men, and the implicit faith of the vulgar, can never prove that to have been, which is impossible in the nature of things ever to be." *M. Tullius Cicero Of the Nature of the Gods*.....with Notes, London, 1741, p. 85. It does not appear to have been noted that in regard to this as to another of his best-known theses, Hume develops a proposition laid down before him.

What Hume did was to elaborate the skeptical argument with a power and fullness which forced attention once for all, alike in England and on the Continent. It is not to be supposed, however, that Hume's philosophy, insofar as it was strictly skeptical—that is, suspensory—drew away deists from their former attitude of confidence to one of absolute doubt. Nor did Hume ever aim at such a result. What he did was to countermine the mines of Berkeley and others, who, finding their supra-rational dogmas set aside by rationalism, deistic or atheistic, sought to discredit at once deistic and atheistic philosophies based on study of the external world, and to establish their creed anew on the basis of their subjective consciousness. As against that method, Hume showed the futility of all apriorism alike, destroying the sham skepticism of the Christian theists by forcing their method to its conclusions. If the universe was to be reduced to a mere contingent of consciousness, he calmly showed, consciousness itself was as easily reducible, on the same principles, to a mere series of states. Idealistic skepticism, having disposed of the universe, must make short work of the hypostatized process of perception. Hume, knowing that strict skepticism is practically null in life, counted on leaving the ground cleared for experiential rationalism. And he did, insofar as he was read. His essay, *Of Miracles* (with the rest of the *Inquiries* of 1748–1751,

which recast his early *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739), posits a principle valid against all supernaturalism whatever; while his *Natural History of Religion* (1757), though affirming deism, rejected the theory of a primordial monotheism, and laid the basis of the science of Comparative Hierology.<sup>1</sup> Finally, his posthumous *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) admit, though indirectly, the untenableness of deism, and fall back decisively upon the atheistic or agnostic position.<sup>2</sup> Like Descartes, he lacked the heroic fibre; but like him he recast philosophy for modern Europe; and its subsequent course is but a development of or a reaction against his work.

## § 10

It is remarkable that this development of opinion took place in that part of the British Islands where religious fanaticism had gone furthest, and speech and thought were socially least free. Free-thought in Scotland before the middle of the seventeenth century can have existed only as a thing furtive and accursed; and though, as we have seen from the *Religio Stoici* of Sir George Mackenzie, unbelief had emerged in some abundance at or before the Restoration, only wealthy men could dare openly to avow their deism.<sup>3</sup> Early in 1697 the clergy had actually succeeded in getting a lad of eighteen, Thomas Aikenhead, hanged for professing deism in general, and in particular for calling the Old Testament "Ezra's Fables," ridiculing the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and expressing the hope and belief that Christianity would be extinct within a century.<sup>4</sup> The spirit of the prosecution may be gathered from the facts that the boy broke down and pleaded penitence,<sup>5</sup> and that the statute enacted the capital penalty only for obstinately persisting in the denial of any of the persons of the Trinity.<sup>6</sup> He had talked reck-

<sup>1</sup> The general reader should take note that in A. Murray's issue of Hume's *Essays* (afterwards published by Ward, Lock, and Co.), which omits altogether the essays on *Miracles* and a *Future State*, the *Natural History of Religion* is much mutilated, though the book professes to be a verbatim reprint.

<sup>2</sup> Even before his death he was suspected of that view. When his coffin was being carried from his house for interment, one of "the refuse of the rabble" is said to have remarked, "Ah, he was an atheist." "No matter," replied another, "he was an honest man" (*Curious Particulars, etc., respecting Chesterfield and Hume*, 1788, p. 15).

<sup>3</sup> See Burton, *Hist. of Scotland*, viii, 549–50, as to the case of Pitcairne.

<sup>4</sup> Howell's *State Trials*, xiii (1812), coll. 917–38.

<sup>5</sup> Macaulay, *History*, ch. xxii; student's ed. ii, 620–21; Burton, *History of Scotland*, viii, 76–77. Aikenhead seems to have been a boy of unusual if unbalanced capacity, even by the bullying account of Macaulay, who missed no opportunity to cover himself by stoning heretics. See the boy's arguments on the bases of ethics, set forth in his "dying speech," as cited by Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, 1714, pp. 119–23, 131, and the version in the *State Trials*, xiii, 930–34.

<sup>6</sup> Macaulay ascribes the savagery of the prosecution to the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, "as cruel as he was base"; but a letter printed in the *State Trials*, from a member of the Privy Council, says the sentence would have been commuted if "the ministers would intercede." They, however, "spoke and preached for cutting him off." *Trials*, xiii, 930; Burton, viii, 77.



lessly against the current creed among youths about his own age, one of whom was in Locke's opinion "the decoy who gave him the books and made him speak as he did."<sup>1</sup> It would appear that a victim was very much wanted; and Aikenhead was not allowed the help of a counsel. It is characteristic of the deadening effect of dogmatic religion on the heart that an act of such brutish cruelty elicited no cry of horror from any Christian writer. At this date the clergy were hounding on the Privy Council to new activity in trying witches; and all works of supposed heretical tendency imported from England were confiscated in the Edinburgh shops, among them being Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*.<sup>2</sup> Scottish intellectual development had in fact been arrested by the Reformation, so that, save for Napier's *Logarithms* (1614) and such a political treatise as Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (1644), the nation of Dunbar and Lyndsay produced for two centuries no secular literature of the least value, and not even a theology of any enduring interest. Deism, accordingly, seems in the latter half of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century to have made fully as much progress in Scotland as in England; and the bigoted clergy could offer little intellectual resistance.

As early as 1696 the Scottish General Assembly, with theological candour, passed an Act "against the Atheistical opinions of the Deists." (*Abridgment of the Acts of the General Assemblies*, 1721, pp. 16, 76; Cunningham, *Hist. of the Ch. of Scotland*, ii, 313.) The opinions specified were "The denying of all revealed religion, the grand mysteries of the gospels.....the resurrection of the dead, and, in a word, the certainty and authority of Scripture revelation; as also, their asserting that there must be a mathematical evidence for each purpose.....and that Natural Light is sufficient to Salvation." All this is deism, pure and simple. But Sir W. Anstruther (a judge in the Court of Session), in the preface to his *Essays Moral and Divine*, Edinburgh, 1710, speaks of "the spreading contagion of *atheism*, which threatens the ruin of our excellent and holy religion." To atheism he devotes two essays; and neither in these nor in one on the Incarnation does he discuss deism, the arguments he handles being really atheistic. Scottish free-thought would seem thus to have gone further than English at the period in question.

As to the prevalence of deism, however, see the posthumous work of Prof. Halyburton, of St. Andrews, *Natural Religion*

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir Francis Masham, printed in the *State Trials*, xiii, 928-29—evidently written by Locke, who seems to have preserved all the papers printed by Howell.

<sup>2</sup> Macaulay, as cited. In 1681 one Francis Borthwick, who had gone abroad at the age of fourteen and turned Jew, was accused of blaspheming Jesus, and had to fly for his life, being outlawed. *State Trials*, as cited, col. 939.

*Insufficient* (Edinburgh, 1714), Epist. of Recom.; pref. pp. 25, 27, and pp. 8, 15, 19, 23, 31, etc. Halyburton's treatise is interesting as showing the psychological state of argumentative Scotch orthodoxy in his day. He professes to repel the deistical argument throughout by reason; he follows Huet, and concurs with Berkeley in contending that mathematics involves anti-rational assumptions; and he takes entire satisfaction in the execution of the lad Aikenhead for deism. Yet in a second treatise, *An Essay Concerning the Nature of Faith*, he contends, as against Locke and the "Rationalists," that the power to believe in the word of God is "expressly deny'd to man in his natural estate," and is a supernatural gift. Thus the Calvinists, like Baxter, were at bottom absolutely insincere in their profession to act upon reason, while insolently charging insincerity on others.

Even apart from deism there had arisen a widespread aversion to dogmatic theology and formal creeds, so that an apologist of 1715 speaks of his day as "a time when creeds and Confessions of Faith are so generally decried, and not only exposed to contempt, as useless inventions.....but are loaded by many writers of distinguished wit and learning with the most fatal and dangerous consequences."<sup>1</sup> This writer admits the intense bitterness of the theological disputes of the time;<sup>2</sup> and he speaks, on the other hand, of seeing "the most sacred mysteries of godliness impudently denied and impugned" by some, while the "distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are by others treacherously undermined, subtilized into an airy phantom, or at least doubted, if not disclaimed."<sup>3</sup> His references are probably to works published in England, notably those of Locke, Toland, Shaftesbury, and Collins, since in Scotland no such literature could then be published; but he doubtless has an eye to Scottish opinion.

While, however, the rationalism of the time could not take book form, there are clear traces of its existence among educated men, even apart from the general complaints of the apologists. Thus the Professor of Medicine at Glasgow University in the opening years of the eighteenth century, John Johnston, was a known freethinker.<sup>4</sup> In the way of moderate or Christian rationalism, the teaching of the prosecuted Simson seems to have counted for something, seeing that Francis Hutcheson at least imbibed from him "liberal" views about future punishment and the salvation of the heathen, which

<sup>1</sup> *A Full Account of the Several Ends and Uses of Confessions of Faith*, first published in 1719 as a preface to a Collection of Confessions of Faith, by Prof. W. Dunbar, of Edinburgh University, 3rd ed. 1775, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Work cited, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*. From the MSS. of John Ramsay, of Ochertyre, 1888, i, 277. Ramsay describes Johnston as a "joyous, manly, honourable man," of whom Kames "was exceedingly fond" (p. 278).



gave much offence in the Presbyterian pulpit in Ulster.<sup>1</sup> And Hutcheson's later vindication of the ethical system of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry Concerning the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) must have tended to attract attention in Scotland to the *Characteristics* after his instalment as a Professor at Glasgow. In an English pamphlet, in 1732, he was satirized as introducing Shaftesbury's system into a University,<sup>2</sup> and it was from the Shaftesbury camp that the first literary expression of freethought in Scotland was sent forth. A young Scotch deist of that school, William Dudgeon, published in 1732 a dialogue entitled *The State of the Moral World Considered*, wherein the optimistic position was taken up with uncommon explicitness; and in 1739 the same writer printed *A Catechism Founded upon Experience and Reason*, prefaced by an Introductory Letter on Natural Religion, which takes a distinctly anti-clerical attitude. The *Catechism* answers to its title, save insofar as it is a priori in its theism and optimistic in its ethic, as is another work of its author in the same year, *A View of the Necessarian or Best Scheme*, defending the Shaftesburyan doctrine against the criticism of Crousaz on Pope's *Essay*. Still more heterodox is his little volume of *Philosophical Letters Concerning the Being and Attributes of God* (1737), where the doctrine goes far towards pantheism. All this propaganda seems to have elicited only one printed reply—an attack on his first treatise in 1732. In the letter prefaced to his *Catechism*, however, he tells that "the bare suspicion of my not believing the opinions in fashion in our country hath already caused me sufficient trouble."<sup>3</sup> His case had in fact been raised in the Church courts, the proceedings going through many stages in the years 1732–36; but in the end no decision was taken,<sup>4</sup> and the special stress of his rationalism in 1739 doubtless owes something alike to the prosecution and to its collapse. Despite such hostility, he must privately have had fair support.<sup>5</sup>

The prosecution of Hutcheson before the Glasgow Presbytery in 1738 reveals vividly the theological temper of the time. He was indicted for teaching to his students "the following two false and dangerous doctrines: first, that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and, second, that we could

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, pp. 15, 20–21.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*, 1752, pp. 430–31.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. McCosh's *Scottish Philosophy*, 1875, pp. 111–13. Dr. McCosh notes that at some points Dudgeon anticipated Hume.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. McCosh, however, admits that the absence of the printer's name on the 1765 edition of Dudgeon's works shows that there was then no thorough freedom of thought in Scotland.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 52.

have a knowledge of good and evil without and prior to a knowledge of God."<sup>1</sup> There has been a natural disposition on the orthodox side to suppress the fact that such teachings were ever ecclesiastically denounced as false, dangerous, and irreligious; and the prosecution seems to have had no effect beyond intensifying the devotion of Hutcheson's students. Among them was Adam Smith, of whom it has justly been said that, "if he was any man's disciple, he was Hutcheson's," inasmuch as he derived from his teacher the bases alike of his moral and political philosophy and of his deistic optimism.<sup>2</sup> Another prosecution soon afterwards showed that the new influences were vitally affecting thought within the Church itself. Hutcheson's friend Leechman, whom he and his party contrived to elect as professor of theology in Glasgow University, was in turn proceeded against (1743–44) for a sermon on Prayer, which Hutcheson and his sympathizers pronounced "noble,"<sup>3</sup> but which "resolved the efficacy of prayer into its reflex influence on the mind of the worshipper"<sup>4</sup>—a theorem which has chronically made its appearance in the Scottish Church ever since, still ranking as a heresy, after having brought a clerical prosecution in the last century on at least one divine, Prof. William Knight, and rousing a scandal against another, the late Dr. Robert Wallace.<sup>5</sup>

Leechman in turn held his ground, and later became Principal of his University; but still the orthodox in Scotland fought bitterly against every semblance of rationalism. Even the anti-deistic essays of Lord-President Forbes of Culloden, head of the Court of Session, when collected<sup>6</sup> and posthumously published, were offensive to the Church as laying undue stress on reason; as accepting the heterodox Biblical theories of Dr. John Hutchinson; and as making the awkward admission that "the freethinkers, with all their perversity, generally are sensible of the social duties, and act up to them better than others do who in other respects think more justly than they."<sup>7</sup> Such an utterance from such a dignitary told of a profound change; and, largely through the influence of Hutcheson and Leechman on

<sup>1</sup> Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 13. Prof. Fowler shows no knowledge of this prosecution in his monograph on Hutcheson (*Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882); and Mr. W. R. Scott, in his, seems to rely for the wording of the indictment solely on Mr. Rae, who gives no references, drawing apparently on unpublished MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Rae, as cited, pp. 11–15.

<sup>3</sup> Scott, as cited, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. James Orr, *David Hume and his Influence*, etc., 1903, pp. 36–37.

<sup>5</sup> Also for a time a theological professor in Edinburgh University.

<sup>6</sup> *The Thoughts Concerning Religion, Natural and Revealed*, appeared in 1735; the *Letter to a Bishop* in 1732; and the *Reflections on the Sources of Incredulity* (left unfinished) posthumously about 1750. Forbes in his youth had been famed as one of the hardest drinkers of his day.

<sup>7</sup> *Reflections on Incredulity*, in *Works*, undated, II, 141–42. Yet the works of Forbes were translated for orthodox purposes into German, and later into French by Père Houbigant (1769), who preserves the passage on freethinkers' morals, though curtailing the *Reflections* as a whole.



a generation of students, the educated Scotland of the latter half of the eighteenth century was in large part either "Moderate" or deistic. After generations of barren controversy,<sup>1</sup> the very aridity of the Presbyterian life intensified the recoil among the educated classes to philosophical and historical interests, leading to the performances of Hume, Smith, Robertson, Millar, Ferguson, and yet others, all rationalists in method and sociologists in their interests.

Of these, Millar, one of Smith's favourite pupils, and a table-talker of "magical vivacity,"<sup>2</sup> was known to be rationalistic in a high degree;<sup>3</sup> while Smith and Ferguson were certainly deists, as was Henry Home (the judge, Lord Kames), who had the distinction of being attacked along with his friend Hume in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1755-56. Home wrote expressly to controvert Hume, alike as to utilitarianism and the idea of causation; but his book, *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion* (published anonymously, 1751), handled the thorny question of free-will in such fashion as to give no less offence than Hume had done; and the orthodox bracketed him with the subject of his criticism. His doctrine was indeed singular, its purport being that there can be no free-will, but that the deity has for wise purposes implanted in men the feeling that their wills are free. The fact of his having been made a judge of the Court of Session since writing his book had probably something to do with the rejection of the whole subject by the General Assembly, and afterwards by the Edinburgh Presbytery; but there had evidently arisen a certain diffidence in the Church, which would be assiduously promoted by "moderates" such as Principal Robertson, the historian. It is noteworthy that, while Home and Hume thus escaped, the other Home, John, who wrote the then admired tragedy of *Douglas*, was soon after forced to resign his position as a minister of the Church for that authorship, deism having apparently more friends in the fold than drama.<sup>4</sup> While the theatre was thus being treated as a place of sin, many of the churches in Scotland were the scenes of repeated Sunday riots. A new manner of psalm-singing had been introduced, and it frequently happened that the congregations divided into two parties, each singing in its own way, till they came to blows. According to one of Hume's biographers, unbelievers were at this

<sup>1</sup> As to which see *A Sober Enquiry into the Grounds of the Present Differences in the Church of Scotland*, 1723.

<sup>2</sup> Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, ed. 1872, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle*, 1860, pp. 492-93. Millar's *Historical View of the English Government* (censured by Hallam) was once much esteemed; and his *Origin of Ranks* is still worth the attention of sociologists.

<sup>4</sup> Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 52-81; Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*, 2nd ed. 1814, i. ch. v; Burton's *Life of Hume*, i. 425-30.

period went to go to church to see the fun.<sup>1</sup> Naturally orthodoxy did not gain ground.

In the case of Adam Smith we have one of the leading instances of the divorce between culture and creed in the Scotland of that age. His intellectual tendencies, primed by Hutcheson, were already revealing themselves when, seeking for something worth study in the unstudious Oxford of his day, he was found by some suspicious supervisor reading Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. The book was seized and the student scolded.<sup>2</sup> When, in 1751, he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, he aroused orthodox comment by abandoning the Sunday class on Christian Evidences set up by Hutcheson, and still further, it is said, by petitioning the Senatus to be allowed to be relieved of the duty of opening his class with prayer.<sup>3</sup> The permission was not given; and the compulsory prayers were "thought to savour strongly of natural religion"; while the lectures on Natural Theology, which were part of the work of the chair, were said to lead "presumptuous striplings" to hold that "the great truths of theology, together with the duties which man owes to God and his neighbours, may be discovered by the light of nature without any special revelation."<sup>4</sup> Smith was thus well founded in rationalism before he became personally acquainted with Voltaire and the other French freethinkers; and the pious contemporary who deplores his associations avows that neither before nor after his French tour was his religious creed ever "properly ascertained."<sup>5</sup> It is clear, however, that it steadily developed in a rationalistic direction. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) the prevailing vein of theistic optimism is sufficiently uncritical; but even there there emerges an apparent doubt on the doctrine of a future state, and positive hostility to certain ecclesiastical forms of it.<sup>6</sup> In the sixth edition, which he prepared for the press in 1790, he deleted the passage which pronounced the doctrine of the Atonement to be in harmony with natural ethics.<sup>7</sup> But most noteworthy of all is his handling of the question of religious establishments in the *Wealth of Nations*.<sup>8</sup> It is so completely naturalistic that only the habit of taking the

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, as cited, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> McCulloch, *Life of Smith* prefixed to ed. of *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1839, p. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, 1888, i. 462-63. Mr. Rae doubts the story, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Ramsay, as last cited.

<sup>5</sup> Ramsay, passage cited.

<sup>6</sup> *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pt. iii, ch. ii, end.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Rae, pp. 427-30. Mr. Rae thinks the deletion stood for no change of opinion, and cites Smith's own private explanation (Sinclair's *Life of Sir John Sinclair*, i. 40) that he thought the passage "unnecessary and misplaced." But this expression must be read in the light of Smith's general reticence concerning established dogmas. Certainly he adhered to his argument—which does not claim to be a demonstration—for the doctrine of a future state.

<sup>8</sup> Bk. v, ch. i, pt. iii, art. 3.



Christian religion for granted could make men miss seeing that its account of the conditions of the rise of new cults applied to that in its origin no less than to the rise of any of its sects. As a whole, the argument might form part of Gibbon's fifteenth chapter. And even allowing for the slowness of the average believer to see the application of a general sociological law to his own system, there must be inferred a great change in the intellectual climate of Scottish life before we can account for Smith's general popularity at home as well as abroad after his handling of "enthusiasm and superstition" in the *Wealth of Nations*. The fact stands out that the two most eminent thinkers in Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century were non-Christians,<sup>1</sup> and that their most intellectual associates were in general sympathy with them.

## § 11

In Ireland, at least in Dublin, during the earlier part of the century, there occurred, on a smaller scale, a similar movement of rationalism, also largely associated with Shaftesbury. In Dublin towards the close of the seventeenth century we have seen Molyneux, the friend and correspondent of Locke, interested in "freethought," albeit much scared by the imprudence of Toland. At the same period there germinated a growth of Unitarianism, which was even more fiercely persecuted than that of Toland's deism. The Rev. Thomas Emlyn, an Englishman, co-pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Wood Street (now Strand Street), Dublin, was found by a Presbyterian and a Baptist to be heretical on the subject of the Trinity, and was indicted in 1702 for blasphemy. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000, which was partly commuted on his release. He protested that South and Sherlock and other writers on the Trinitarian controversy might have been as justly prosecuted as he; but Irish Protestant orthodoxy was of a keener scent than English, and Emlyn was fain, when released, to return to his native land.<sup>2</sup> His colleague Boyse, like many other Churchmen, wished that the unhappy trinitarian controversy "were buried in silence," but was careful to conform doctrinally. More advanced thinkers

<sup>1</sup> Smith's admiration for Voltaire might alone indicate his mental attitude. As to that see F. W. Hirst, *Adam Smith* (Eng. Men of Letters ser.), pp. 127-28. But the assertion of Skarzynski, that Smith, after being an Idealist under the influence of Hume, "returned a materialist" from his intercourse with Voltaire and other French freethinkers, is an exhibition of learned ignorance. See Hirst, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. Dr. W. Hamilton Drummond, 1842, pp. 5-6, 47; Skeats, *Hist. of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, pp. 238-39; Wallace, *Anti-Trinitarian Biography*, iii, art. 360.

had double reason to be reticent. As usual, however, persecution provoked the growth it sought to stifle; and after the passing of the Irish Toleration Act of 1719, a more liberal measure than the English, there developed in Ulster, and even in Dublin, a Unitarian movement akin to that proceeding in England.<sup>1</sup> In the next generation we find in the same city a coterie of Shaftesburyans, centring around Lord Molesworth, the friend of Hutcheson, a man of affairs devoted to intellectual interests. It was within a few years of his meeting Molesworth that Hutcheson produced his *Inquiry*, championing Shaftesbury's ideas;<sup>2</sup> and other literary men were similarly influenced. It is even suggested that Hutcheson's clerical friend Synge, whom we have seen<sup>3</sup> in 1713 attempting a ratiocinative answer to the unbelief he declared to be abundant around him, was not only influenced by Shaftesbury through Molesworth, but latterly "avoided publication lest his opinions should prejudice his career in the Church."<sup>4</sup> After the death of Molesworth, in 1725, the movement he set up seems to have languished;<sup>5</sup> but, as we have seen, there were among the Irish bishops men given to philosophic controversy, and the influence of Berkeley cannot have been wholly obscurantist. When in 1756 we read of the Arian Bishop Clayton<sup>6</sup> proposing in the Irish House of Lords to drop the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, we realize that in Ireland thought was far from stagnant. The heretic bishop, however, died (February, 1758) just as he was about to be prosecuted for the anti-Athanasian heresies of his last book; and thenceforth Ireland plays no noticeable part in the development of rationalism, political interests soon taking the place of religious, with the result that orthodoxy recovered ground.

It cannot be doubted that the spectacle of religious wickedness presented by the operation of the odious penal laws against Catholics,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Drummond, as cited, pp. 29-30; *History, Opinions, etc., of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 154, note.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, pp. 28-29, 35-36. The suggestion is not quite convincing. Synge, after becoming Archbishop of Tuam, continued to publish his propagandist tracts, among them *An Essay towards making the Knowledge of Religion Easy to the Meanest Capacity* (6th ed. 1734), which is quite orthodox, and which argues (p. 3) that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be believed, and not pried into, "because it is above our understanding to comprehend." All the while there was being sold also his early treatise, *A Gentleman's Religion: in Three Parts*.....with an Appendix, wherein it is proved that nothing contrary to our Reason can possibly be the object of our belief, but that it is no just exception against some of the doctrines of Christianity that they are above our reason." Scott, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> All that is told of this prelate by Lecky (*Hist. of Ireland in the 18th Cent.* 1892, i, 207) is that at Killala he patronized horse-races. He was industrious on more episcopal lines. He wrote an *Introduction to the History of the Jews*; a *Vindication of Biblical Chronology*; two treatises on prophecy; an anti-Athanasian *Essay on Spirit* (1751), which aroused much controversy; a *Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament*, in answer to Bolingbroke (2 vols. 1752-1754; 2nd ed. 1757; rep. with the *Essay on Spirit*, Dublin, 1759), which led to his being prosecuted; and other works. The offence given by the *Vindication* lay in his denunciation of the Athanasian creed, and of the bigotry of those who supported it. See pt. iii, letters i and ii. The *Essay on Spirit* is no less heterodox. In other respects, however, Clayton is ultra-orthodox.



and the temper of the Protestant Ascendancy party in religious matters, had bred rational skepticism in Ireland in the usual way. Molesworth stands out in Irish history as a founder of a new and saner patriotism; and his doctrines would specially appeal to men of a secular and critical way of thinking. Heretical bishops imply heretical laymen. But the environment was unpropitious to dispassionate thinking. The very relaxation of the Penal Code favoured a reversion to "moderate" orthodoxy; and the new political strifes of the last quarter of the century, destined as they were to be reopened in the next, determined the course of Irish culture in another way.

## § 12

In England, meanwhile, there was beginning the redistribution of energies which can be seen to have prepared for the intellectual and political reaction of the end of the century. There had been no such victory of faith as is supposed to have been wrought by the forensic theorem of Butler. An orthodox German observer, making a close inquest about 1750, cites the *British Magazine* as stating in 1749 that half the educated people were then deists; and he, after full inquiry, agrees.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, Richardson speaks tragically in the Postscriptum to *Clarissa* of seeing "skepticism and infidelity openly avowed, and even endeavoured to be propagated from the press; the great doctrines of the gospel brought into question"; and he describes himself as "seeking to steal in with a disguised plea for religion." Instead of being destroyed by the clerical defence, the deistic movement had really penetrated the Church, which was become as rationalistic in its methods as its function would permit, and the educated classes, which had arrived at a state of compromise. Pope, the chief poet of the preceding generation, had been visibly deistic in his thinking; as Dryden had inferribly been before him; and to such literary prestige was added the prestige of scholarship. The academic Conyers Middleton, whose *Letter from Rome* had told so heavily against Christianity in exposing the pagan derivations of much of Catholicism, and who had further damaged the doctrine of inspiration in his anonymous *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731), while professing to refute Tindal, had carried to yet further lengths his service to the critical spirit. In his famous *Free Inquiry* into the miracles of post-apostolic Christianity (1749), again professing to strike at Rome, he had laid the foundations of a new structure of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. W. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Britannien*, Hannover, 1752, p. 440.

comparative criticism, and had given permanent grounds for rejecting the miracles of the sacred books.

Middleton's book appeared a year after Hume's essay *Of Miracles*, and it made out no such philosophic case as Hume's against the concept of miracle; but it created at once, by its literary brilliance and its cogent argument, a sensation such as had thus far been made neither by Hume's philosophic argument nor by Francklin's anticipation of that.<sup>1</sup> Middleton had duly safeguarded himself by positing the certainty of the gospel miracles and of those wrought by the Apostles, on the old principle<sup>2</sup> that prodigies were divinely arranged so far forth as was necessary to establish Christianity, but no further. "The history of the gospel," he writes, "I hope may be true, though the history of the Church be fabulous."<sup>3</sup> But his argument against post-Apostolic miracles is so strictly naturalistic that no vigilant reader could fail to realize its fuller bearing upon all miracles whatsoever. With Hume and Francklin, he insisted that facts incredible in themselves could not be established by any amount or kind of testimony; and he suggested no measure of comparative credibility as between the two orders of miracle. With the deists in general, he argued that knowledge "either of the ways or will of the Creator" was to be had only through study of "that revelation which he made of himself from the beginning in the beautiful fabric of this visible world."<sup>4</sup> An antagonist accordingly wrote that his theses were: "First, that there were no miracles wrought in the primitive Church; Secondly, that all the primitive fathers were fools or knaves, and most of them both one and the other. And it is easy to observe, the whole tenor of your argument tends to prove, Thirdly, that no miracles were wrought by Christ or his apostles; and Fourthly, that these too were fools or knaves, or both."<sup>5</sup> A more temperate opponent pressed the same point in less explosive language. Citing Middleton's demand for an inductive method, this critic asks with much point: "What does he mean by 'deserting the path of Nature and experience,' but giving in to the belief of any miracles, and acknowledging the reality of events contrary to the known effects of the established Laws of Nature?"<sup>6</sup>

No other answer was seriously possible. In the very act of ostentatiously terming Tindal an "infidel," Middleton describes an answer made to him by the apologist Chapman as a sample of a

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Inquiry*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> A *Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton*, occasioned by his late "*Free Inquiry*," 1749, pp. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> A *Free Answer to Dr. Middleton's "Free Inquiry,"* by William Dodwell [son of the older and brother of the younger Henry], Rector of Shottesbrook, 1749, pp. 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> Put by Huarte in 1575. Above, i, 472.

<sup>6</sup> *Inquiry*, pref. pp. x, xxii.



kind of writing which did "more hurt and discredit" to Christianity "than all the attacks of its open adversaries."<sup>1</sup> In support of the miracles of the gospel and the apostolic history he offers merely conventional pleas: against the miracles related by the Fathers he brings to bear an incessant battery of destructive criticism. We may sum up that by the middle of the eighteenth century the essentials of the Christian creed, openly challenged for a generation by avowed deists, were abandoned by not a few scholars within the pale of the Church, of whom Middleton was merely the least reticent. After his death was published his *Vindication of the Inquiry* (1751); and in his collected works (1752) was included his *Reflections on the Variations or Inconsistencies which are found among the Four Evangelists*, wherein it is demonstrated that "the belief of the inspiration and absolute infallibility of the evangelists seems to be more absurd than even that of transubstantiation itself."<sup>2</sup> The main grounds of orthodoxy were thus put in doubt in the name of a critical orthodoxy. In short, the deistic movement had done what it lay in it to do. The old evangelical or pietistic view of life was discredited among instructed people, and in this sense it was Christianity that had "decayed." Its later recovery was economic, not intellectual.

Thus Skelton writes in 1751 that "our modern apologists for Christianity often defend it on deistical principles" (*Deism Revealed*, pref. p. xii. Cp. vol. ii, pp. 234, 237). See also Sir Leslie Stephen as cited above, p. 149, note; and Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, pp. 33-36.

An interesting instance of liberalizing orthodoxy is furnished by the Rev. Arthur Ashley Sykes, who contributed many volumes to the general deistic discussion, some of them anonymously. In the preface to his *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1732; 2nd ed. enlarged, 1755) Sykes remarks that "since..... systematical opinions have been received and embraced in such a manner that it has not been safe to contradict them, the burden of vindicating Christianity has been very much increased. Its friends have been much embarrassed through fear of speaking against *local truths*; and its adversaries have so successfully attacked those weaknesses that Christianity itself has been deemed indefensible, when in reality the follies of Christians alone have been so." Were Christians left to the simple doctrines of Christ and the Apostles, he contends, Infidelity could make no converts. And at the close of the book he writes: "Would to God that Christians would be content with the plainness and simplicity of the gospel.....That they would not vend under the name of evangelical truth the absurd and

<sup>1</sup> *Inquiry*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, ii, 348.

contradictory schemes of ignorant or wicked men! That they would part with that load of rubbish which makes thinking men almost sink under the weight, and gives too great a handle for Infidelity!" Such writing could not give satisfaction to the ecclesiastical authorities; and as little could Sykes's remarkable admission (*The Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1740, p. 242): "When the advantages of revelation are to be specified, I cannot conceive that it should be maintained as necessary to *fix a rule of morality*. For what one principle of morality is there which the heathen moralists had not asserted or maintained? Before ever any revelation is offered to mankind they are supposed to be so well acquainted with moral truths as from them to judge of the truth of the revelation itself." Again he writes:—

"Nor can revelation be necessary to *ascertain religion*. For religion consisting in nothing but doing our duties from a sense of the being of God, revelation is not necessary to this end, unless it be said that we cannot know that there is a God, and what our duties are, without it. *Reason* will teach us that there is a *God*.....that we are to be just and charitable to our neighbours; that we are to be temperate and sober in ourselves" (*id.* p. 244).

This is simple Shaftesburyan deism, and all that the apologist goes on to contend for is that revelation "contains *motives* and *reasons* for the practice of what is right, more and different from what natural reason without this help can suggest." He seems, however, to have believed in miracles, though an anonymous *Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices* (1748) which is ascribed to him quietly undermines the whole evangelical doctrine. Throughout, he is remarkable for the amenity of his tone towards "infidels."

Balguy, a man of less ability, is notably latitudinarian in his theology. In the very act of criticizing the deists, he complains of Locke's arbitrariness in deriving morality from the will of God. Religion, he argues, is so derived, but morality is inherent in the whole nature of things, and is the same for God and men. This position, common to the school of Clarke, is at bottom that of Shaftesbury and the Naturalists. All that Balguy says for religion is that a doctrine of rewards and punishments is necessary to stimulate the average moral sense; and that the Christian story of the condescension of Omnipotence in coming to earth and suffering misery for man's sake ought to overwhelm the imagination! (See *A Letter to a Deist*, 2nd ed. 1730, pp. 5, 14, 15, 31; *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, pt. ii, 1729, p. 41 sq.)

The next intellectual step in natural course would have been a revision of the deistic assumptions, insofar, that is, as certain positive assumptions were common to the deists. But, as we have seen,



certain fresh issues were raised as among the deists themselves. In addition to those above noted, there was the profoundly important one as to ethics. Shaftesbury, who rejected the religious basis, held a creed of optimism; and this optimism was assailed by Mandeville, who in consequence was opposed as warmly by the deist Hutcheson and others as by Law and Berkeley. To grapple with this problem, and with the underlying cosmic problem, there was needed at least as much general mental activity as went to the antecedent discussion; and the main activity of the nation was now being otherwise directed. The negative process, the impeachment of Christian supernaturalism, had been accomplished so far as the current arguments went. Toland and Collins had fought the battle of free discussion, forcing ratiocination on the Church; Collins had shaken the creed of prophecy; Shaftesbury had impugned the religious conception of morals; and Mandeville had done so more profoundly, laying the foundations of scientific utilitarianism.<sup>1</sup> So effective had been the utilitarian propaganda in general that the orthodox Brown (author of the once famous *Estimate* of the life of his countrymen), in his criticism of Shaftesbury (1751), wrote as a pure utilitarian against an inconsistent one, and defended Christianity on strictly utilitarian lines. Woolston, following up Collins, had shaken the faith in New Testament miracles; Middleton had done it afresh with all the decorum that Woolston lacked; and Hume had laid down with masterly clearness the philosophic principle which rebuts all attempts to prove miracles as such.<sup>2</sup> Tindal had clinched the case for "natural" theism as against revelationism; and the later deists, notably Morgan, had to some extent combined these results.<sup>3</sup> This literature was generally distributed; and so far the case had been thrashed out.

## § 13

To carry intellectual progress much further there was needed a general movement of scientific study and a reform in education. The translation of La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* (1749)<sup>4</sup> found a public no better prepared for the problems he raised than that addressed by Strutt eighteen years before; and the reply of Luzac, *Man More than a Machine*, in the preface to which the translator (1752) declared that "irreligion and infidelity overspread the land,"

<sup>1</sup> Cp. essay on Mandeville, in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> As against the objections of Mr. Lang, see the author's paper in *Studies in Religious Fallacy*.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the summary of Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 177-78, which is founded on that of Pusey's early *Historical Enquiry* concerning German Rationalism, pp. 124-26.

<sup>4</sup> Rep. same year at Dublin; 2nd ed. 1750. The first ed. was ascribed to D'Argens—an error caused though not justified by the publisher's notice.

probably satisfied what appetite there was for such a discussion. There had begun a change in the prevailing mental life, a diversion of interest from ideas as such to political and mercantile interests. The middle and latter part of the eighteenth century is the period of the rise of (1) the new machine industries, and (2) the new imperialistic policy of Chatham.<sup>1</sup> Both alike withdrew men from problems of mere belief, whether theological or scientific.<sup>2</sup> That the reaction was not one of mere fatigue over deism we have already seen. It was a general diversion of energy, analogous to what had previously taken place in France in the reign of Louis XIV. As the poet Gray, himself orthodox, put the case in 1754, "the mode of freethinking has given place to the mode of not thinking at all."<sup>3</sup> In Hume's opinion the general pitch of national intelligence south of the Tweed was lowered.<sup>4</sup> This state of things of course was favourable to religious revival; but what took place was rather a new growth of emotional pietism in the new industrial masses (the population being now on a rapid increase), under the ministry of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and a further growth of similar religion in the new provincial middle-class that grew up on the industrial basis. The universities all the while were at the lowest ebb of culture, but officially rabid against philosophic freethinking.<sup>5</sup>

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that all this meant a dying out of deism among the educated classes. The statement of Goldsmith, about 1760, that deists in general "have been driven into a confession of the necessity of revelation, or an open avowal of atheism,"<sup>6</sup> is not to be taken seriously. Goldsmith, whose own orthodoxy is very doubtful, had a whimsical theory that skepticism, though it might not injure morals, has a "manifest tendency to subvert the literary merits" of any country;<sup>7</sup> and argued accordingly. Deism, remaining fashionable, did but fall partly into the background of living interests, the more concrete issues of politics and the new imaginative literature occupying the foreground. It was early in the reign of George III that Sir William Blackstone, having had the curiosity to listen in succession

<sup>1</sup> The point is further discussed in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 175-76.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. G. B. Hertz, *The Old Colonial System*, 1905, pp. 4, 22, 93, 157.

<sup>3</sup> Letter xxxi, in Mason's *Memoir*.

<sup>4</sup> Hill Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 433, 434, 484-85, 487.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the verdicts of Gibbon in his *Autobiography*, and of Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i, art. 2; and see the memoir of Smith in 1831 ed. and McCulloch's ed., and Rae's *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 24. It appears that about 1764 many English people sent their sons to Edinburgh University on account of the better education there. Letter of Blair, in Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 229.

<sup>6</sup> *Essays*, iv, end.

<sup>7</sup> *Present State of Polite Learning*, 1765, ch. vi. His story of how the father of St. Foix cured the youth of the desire to rationalize his creed is not suggestive of conviction. The father pointed to a crucifix, saying, "Behold the fate of a reformer." The story has been often plagiarized since—e.g., in Galt's *Annals of the Parish*.



to the preaching of every clergyman in London, "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero," and declared that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.<sup>1</sup> When the Church was thus deistic, the educated laity can have been no less so. The literary status of deism after 1750 was really higher than ever. It was now represented by Hume; by ADAM SMITH (*Moral Sentiments*, 1759); by the scholarship of Conyers Middleton; and by the posthumous works (1752-54) of Lord BOLINGBROKE, who, albeit more of a debater than a thinker, debated often with masterly skill, in a style unmatched for harmony and energetic grace, which had already won him a great literary prestige, though the visible insincerity of his character, and the habit of browbeating, always countervailed his charm. His influence, commonly belittled, was much greater than writers like Johnson would admit; and it went deep. Voltaire, who had been his intimate, tells<sup>2</sup> that he had known some young pupils of Bolingbroke who altogether denied the historic actuality of the Gospel Jesus—a stretch of criticism beyond the assimilative power of that age.

His motive to write for posthumous publication, however, seems rather to have been the venting of his tumultuous feelings than any philosophic purpose. An overweening deist, he is yet at much pains to disparage the *a priori* argument for deism, bestowing some of his most violent epithets on Dr. Samuel Clarke, who seems to have exasperated him in politics. But his castigation of "divines" is tolerably impartial on that side; and he is largely concerned to deprive them of grounds for their functions, though he finally insists that churches are necessary for purposes of public moral teaching. His own teachings represent an effort to rationalize deism. The God whom he affirms is to be conceived or described only as omnipotent and omniscient (or all-wise), not as good or benevolent any more than as vindictive. Thus he had assimilated part of the Spinozistic and the atheistic case against anthropomorphism, while still using anthropomorphic language on the score that "we must speak of God after the manner of men." Beyond this point he compromises to the extent of denying special while admitting collective or social providences; though he is positive in his denial of the actuality or the moral need of a future state. As to morals he takes the ordinary deistic line, putting the innate "law of nature"

<sup>1</sup> Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 1878, ii, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Dieu et les Hommes*, ch. xxxix.

as the sufficient and only revelation by the deity to his creatures. On the basis of that inner testimony he rejects the Old Testament as utterly unworthy of deity, but endorses the universal morality found in the gospels, while rejecting their theology. It was very much the deism of Voltaire, save that it made more concessions to anti-theistic logic.

The weak side of Bolingbroke's polemic was its inconsistency—a flaw deriving from his character. In the spirit of a partisan debater he threw out at any point any criticism that appeared for the moment plausible; and, having no scientific basis or saving rectitude, would elsewhere take up another and a contradictory position. Careful antagonists could thus discredit him by mere collation of his own utterances.<sup>1</sup> But, the enemy being no more consistent than he, his influence was not seriously affected in the world of ordinary readers; and much of his attack on "divines," on dogmas, and on Old Testament morality must have appealed to many, thus carrying on the discredit of orthodoxy in general. Leland devoted to him an entire volume of his *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, and in all bestows more space upon him than on all the others together—a sufficient indication of his vogue.

In his lifetime, however, Bolingbroke had been extremely careful to avoid compromising himself. Mr. Arthur Hassall, in his generally excellent monograph on Bolingbroke (*Statesmen Series*, 1889, p. 226), writes, in answer to the attack of Johnson, that "Bolingbroke, during his lifetime, had never scrupled to publish criticisms, remarkable for their freedom, on religious subjects." I cannot gather to what he refers; and Mr. Walter Sichel, in his copious biography (2 vols. 1901-1902), indicates no such publications. The *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, which contain (Lett. iii, sect. 2) a skeptical discussion of the Pentateuch as history, though written in 1735-36, were only posthumously published, in 1752. The *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*, produced by Voltaire in 1767, but dated 1736, is Voltaire's own work, based on Bolingbroke. In his letter to Swift of September 12, 1724 (*Swift's Works*, Scott's ed. 1824, xvi, 448-49), Bolingbroke angrily repudiates the title of *esprit fort*, declaring, in the very temper in which pious posterity has aspersed himself, that "such are the pests of society, because they endeavour to loosen the bands of it.....I therefore not only disown, but I detest, this character." In this letter he even affects to believe in "the truth of the divine revelation

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Bishop Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 6th ed. 1774, p. 65, note, and the *Analysis* of Bolingbroke's writings (1755) there cited. Mr. Sichel's reply to Sir L. Stephen's criticism may or may not be successful; but he does not deal with Bishop Law's.



of Christianity." He began to write his essays, it is true, before his withdrawal to France in 1735, but with no intention of speedily publishing them. In his *Letter to Mr. Pope* (published with the *Letter to Wyndham*, 1753), p. 481, he writes: "I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be so in philosophy." Cp. pp. 485-86. It is thus a complete blunder on the part of Bagehot to say (*Literary Studies*, Hutton's ed. iii, 137) that Butler's *Analogy*, published in 1736, was "designed as a confutation of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke." It is even said (Warton, *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 294-95) that Pope did not know Bolingbroke's real opinions; but Pope's untruthfulness was such as to discredit such a statement. Cp. Bolingbroke's *Letter* as cited, p. 521, and his *Philosophical Works*, 8vo-ed. 1754, ii, 405. It is noteworthy that a volume of controversial sermons entitled *A Preservative against unsettled notions and Want of Principles in Religion*, so entirely stupid in its apologetics as to be at times positively entertaining, was published in 1715 by Joseph Trapp, M.A., "Chaplain to the Right Honble. The Lord Viscount Bolingbroke."

In seeking to estimate Bolingbroke's posthumous influence we have to remember that after the publication of his works the orthodox members of his own party, who otherwise would have forgiven him all his vices and insincerities, have held him up to hatred. Scott, for instance, founding on Bolingbroke's own dishonest denunciation of freethinkers as men seeking to loosen the bands of society, pronounced his arrangement for the posthumous issue of his works "an act of wickedness more purely diabolical than any hitherto upon record in the history of any age or nation" (Note to Bolingbroke's letter above cited in *Swift's Works*, xvi, 450). It would be an error, on the other hand, to class him among either the great sociologists or the great philosophers. Mr. Sichel undertakes to show (vol. ii, ch. x) that Bolingbroke had stimulated Gibbon to a considerable extent in his treatment of early Christianity. This is in itself quite probable, and some of the parallels cited are noteworthy; but Mr. Sichel, who always writes as a panegyrist, makes no attempt to trace the common French sources for both. He does show that Voltaire manipulated Bolingbroke's opinions in reproducing them. But he does not critically recognize the incoherence of Bolingbroke's eloquent treatises. Mr. Hassall's summary is nearer the truth; but that in turn does not note how well fitted was Bolingbroke's swift and graceful declamation to do its work with the general public, which (if it accepted him at all) would make small account of self-contradiction.

## § 14

In view of such a reinforcement of its propaganda, deism could

not be regarded as in the least degree written down. In 1765, in fact, we find Diderot recounting, on the authority of d'Holbach, who had just returned from a visit to this country, that "the Christian religion is nearly extinct in England. The deists are innumerable; there are almost no atheists; those who are so conceal it. An atheist and a scoundrel are almost synonymous terms for them."<sup>1</sup> Nor did the output of deistic literature end with the posthumous works of Bolingbroke. These were followed by translations of the new writings of VOLTAIRE,<sup>2</sup> who had assimilated the whole propaganda of English deism, and gave it out anew with a wit and brilliancy hitherto unknown in argumentative and critical literature. The freethinking of the third quarter of the century, though kept secondary to more pressing questions, was thus at least as deeply rooted and as convinced as that of the first quarter; and it was probably not much less common among educated men, though new social influences caused it to be more decried.

The hapless Chatterton, fatally precocious, a boy in years and experience of life, a man in understanding at seventeen, incurred posthumous obloquy more for his "infidelity" than for the harmless literary forgeries which reveal his poetic affinity to a less prosaic age. It is a memorable fact that this first recovery of the lost note of imaginative poetry in that "age of prose and reason" is the exploit of a boy whose mind was as independently "freethinking" on current religion as it was original even in its imitative reversion to the poetics of the past. Turning away from the impossible mythicism and mysticism of the Tudor and Stuart literatures, as from the fanaticism of the Puritans, the changing English world after the Restoration had let fall the artistic possession of imaginative feeling and style which was the true glory of the time of Renaissance. The ill-strung genius of Chatterton seems to have been the first to reunite the sense of romantic beauty with the spirit of critical reason. He was a convinced deist, avowing in his verse, in his pathetic will (1770), in a late letter, and at times in his talk, that he was "no Christian," and contemning the ethic of Scripture history and the absurdity of literal inspiration.<sup>3</sup> Many there must have been who went as far, with less courage of avowal.

What was lacking to the age, once more, was a social foundation on which it could not only endure but develop. In a nation of which the majority had no intellectual culture, such a foundation could not

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Diderot*, ed. 1841, ii, 25.

<sup>2</sup> These had begun as early as 1753 (*Micromégas*).

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, ed. 1842, i, pp. cix, 445; ii, 628, 728. Cp. the poem *Kew Gardens*, left in MS.



exist. Green exaggerates<sup>1</sup> when he writes that "schools there were none, save the grammar schools of Edward and Elizabeth";<sup>2</sup> but by another account only twelve public schools were founded in the long reign of George III;<sup>3</sup> and, as a result of the indifference of two generations, masses of the people "were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive."<sup>4</sup> A great increase of population had followed on the growth of towns and the development of commerce and manufactures even between 1700 and 1760;<sup>5</sup> and thereafter the multiplication was still more rapid. There was thus a positive fall in the culture standards of the majority of the people. According to Massey, "hardly any tradesman in 1760 had more instruction than qualified him to add up a bill"; and "a labourer, mechanic, or domestic servant who could read or write possessed a rare accomplishment."<sup>6</sup> As for the Charity Schools established between 1700 and 1750, their express object was to rear humble tradesmen and domestics, not to educate in the proper sense of the term.

In the view of life which accepted this state of things the educated deists seem to have shared; at least, there is no record of any agitation by them for betterment. The state of political thought was typified in the struggle over "Wilkes and Liberty," from which cool temperaments like Hume's turned away in contempt; and it is significant that poor men were persecuted for freethinking while the better-placed went free. JACOB ILIVE, for denying in a pamphlet (1753) the truth of revelation, was pilloried thrice, and sent to hard labour for three years. In 1754 the Grand Jury of Middlesex "presented" the editor and publisher of Bolingbroke's posthumous works<sup>7</sup>—a distinction that in the previous generation had been bestowed on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*; and in 1761, as before noted, Peter Annet, aged seventy, was pilloried twice and sent to prison for discrediting the Pentateuch; as if that were a more serious offence than his former attacks on the gospels and on St. Paul. The personal influence of George III, further, told everywhere against freethinking; and the revival of penalties would have checked publishing even if there had been no withdrawal of interest to politics.

Yet more or less freethinking treatises did appear at intervals

<sup>1</sup> I here take a few sentences from my paper, *The Church and Education*, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> *Short History*, p. 717. The *Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools*, by Nicholas Carlisle, 1818, shows that schools were founded in all parts of the country by private bequest or public action during the eighteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Collis, in *Transactions of the Social Science Association*, 1857, p. 126. According to Collis, 48 had been founded by James I, 28 under Charles I, 16 under the Commonwealth, 36 under Charles II, 4 under James II, 7 under William and Mary, 11 under Anne, 17 under George I, and 7 under George II. He does not indicate their size.

<sup>4</sup> Green, as last cited. <sup>5</sup> Gibbins, *Industrial History of England*, 1894, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. of England under George III*, ed. 1865, ii, 83.

<sup>7</sup> The document is given in Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 53-55.

in addition to the works of the better-known writers, such as Bolingbroke and Hume, after the period commonly marked as that of the "decline of deism." In the list may be included a few by Unitarians, who at this stage were doing critical work. Like a number of the earlier works above mentioned, the following (save Evanson) are overlooked in Sir Leslie Stephen's survey:—

- 1746. *Essay on Natural Religion*. Falsely attributed to Dryden.
- " *Deism fairly stated and fully vindicated*, etc. Anon.
- 1749. J. G. Cooper, *Life of Socrates*.
- 1750. John Dove, *A Creed founded on Truth and Common Sense*.
- " *The British Oracle*. (Two numbers only.)
- 1752. *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy Shaken*. Four vols. of free-thinking pamphlets, collected (and some written) by Thomas Gordon, formerly secretary to Trenchard. Edited by R. Barron. (Rep. 1768.)
- 1765. W. Dudgeon, *Philosophical Works* (reprints of those of 1732, -4, -7, -9, above mentioned). Privately printed—at Glasgow?
- 1772. E. Evanson, *The Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation*, etc.
- 1773. — *Three Discourses* (1. Upon the Man after God's own Heart; 2. Upon the Faith of Abraham; 3. Upon the Seal of the Foundation of God).
- 1777. — *Letter to Bishop Hurd*.
- 1781. W. Nicholson, *The Doubts of the Infidels*. (Rep. by R. Carlile.)
- 1782. W. Turner, *Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*.
- 1785. Dr. G. Hoggart Toulmin, *The Antiquity and Duration of the World*.
- 1789. — *The Eternity of the Universe*.<sup>1</sup> (Rep. 1825.)
- " Dr. T. Cooper, *Tracts, Ethical, Theological, and Political*.
- 1792. E. Evanson, *The Dissonance of the Four Evangelists*. (Rep. 1805.)
- 1795. Dr. J. A. O'Keefe, *On the Progress of the Human Understanding*.
- 1797. John C. Davies, *The Scripturian's Creed*. Prosecuted and imprisoned. (Book rep. 1822 and 1839.)

Of the work here noted a considerable amount was done by Unitarians, Evanson being of that persuasion, though at the time of writing his earlier Unitarian works he was an Anglican vicar.<sup>2</sup> During the first half of the eighteenth century, despite the movement at the end of the seventeenth, specific anti-Trinitarianism was not much in evidence, the deistic controversy holding the foreground. But gradually Unitarianism made fresh headway. One dissenting clergyman, Martin Tomkyns, who had been dismissed by his congregation at Stoke Newington for his "Arian or Unitarian opinions," published in 1722 *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian, concerning the plain sense of the Trinity*, in reply to the treatise of Dr. Isaac Watts on *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*. A second edition of Tomkyns's book appeared in 1748, with a further reply to Watts's *Dissertations* of 1724. The result seems to have been an unsettlement of the orthodoxy of the hymn-writer. There is express testimony from Dr. Lardner, a very trustworthy witness, that

<sup>1</sup> A reply, *The World proved to be not eternal nor mechanical*, appeared in 1790.

<sup>2</sup> *The Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation of God* was published anonymously.



Watts in his latter years, "before he was seized with an imbecility of his faculties," was substantially a Unitarian. His special papers on the subject were suppressed by his executors; but the full text of his *Solemn Address to the Great and Blessed God* goes far to bear out Lardner's express assertion.<sup>1</sup> Other prominent religionists were more outspoken. The most distinguished names associated with the position were those of Lardner and Priestley, of whom the former, trained as a simple "dissenter," avowedly reached his conclusions without much reference to Socinian literature;<sup>2</sup> and the second, who was similarly educated, no less independently gave up the doctrines of the Atonement and the Trinity, passing later from the Arian to the Socinian position after reading Lardner's *Letter on the Logos*.<sup>3</sup> As Priestley derived his determinism from Collins,<sup>4</sup> it would appear that the deistical movement had set up a general habit of reasoning which thus wrought even on Christians who, like Lardner and Priestley, undertook to rebut the objections of unbelievers to their faith. A generally rationalistic influence is to be noted in the works of the Unitarian Antipædobaptist Dr. Joshua Toulmin, author of *lives of Socinus* (1777) and *Biddle* (1789), and many other solid works, including a sermon on "The Injustice of classing Unitarians with Deists and Infidels" (1797). In his case the "classing" was certainly inconvenient. In 1791 the effigy of Paine was burned before his door, and his windows broken. His house was saved by being closely guarded; but his businesses of schoolkeeping and bookselling had to be given up. It thus becomes intelligible how, after a period in which Dissent, contemned by the State Church, learned to criticize that Church's creed, there emerged in England towards the close of the eighteenth century a fresh movement of specific Unitarianism.

Evanson and Toulmin were scholarly writers, though without the large learning of Lardner and the propagandist energy and reputation of Priestley; and the Unitarian movement, in a quiet fashion, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. It owed much of its immunity at this stage, doubtless, to the large element of tacit deism in the Church; and apart from the scholarly work of Lardner both Priestley and Evanson did something for New Testament criticism, as well as towards the

<sup>1</sup> See the *Biographical Introduction* to the Unitarian reprint of Watts's *Solemn Address*, 1840, which gives the letters of Lardner. And cp. Skeats, *Hist. of the English Free Churches*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Lardner*, by Dr. Kippis, prefixed to *Works*, ed. 1835, i. p. xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of Priestley*, 1806, pp. 30-32, 35, 37. The *Letter on the Logos* was addressed by Lardner to the first Lord Barrington, and was first published anonymously, in 1759.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of Priestley*, p. 19.

clearing-up of Christian origins. Evanson was actually prosecuted in 1773, on local initiative, for a sermon of Unitarian character delivered by him in the parish church of Tewkesbury on Easter-Day of 1771; and, what is much more remarkable, members of his congregation, at a single defence-meeting in an inn, collected £150 to meet his costs.<sup>1</sup> Five years later he had given up the belief in eternal punishment, though continuing to believe in "long protracted" misery for sinners.<sup>2</sup> Still later, after producing his *Dissonance*, he became uncommonly drastic in his handling of the Canon. He lived well into the nineteenth century, and published in 1805 a vigorous tractate, *Second Thoughts on the Trinity*, recommended to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester. In that he treats the First Gospel as a forgery of the second century. The method is indiscriminating, and the author lays much uncritical stress upon prophecy. On the whole, the Unitarian contribution to rational thought, then as later, was secondary or ancillary, though on the side of historical investigation it was important. Lardner's candour is as uncommon as his learning; and Priestley<sup>3</sup> and Evanson have a solvent virtue.<sup>4</sup> In all three the limitation lies in the fixed adherence to the concept of revelation, which withheld them from radical rationalism even as it did from Arianism. Evanson's ultra-orthodox acceptance of the Apocalypse is significant of his limitations; and Priestley's calibre is indicated by his life-long refusal to accept the true scientific inference from his own discovery of oxygen. A more pronounced evolution was that of the Welsh deist David Williams, who, after publishing two volumes of *Sermons on Religious Hypocrisy* (1774), gave up his post as a dissenting preacher, and, in conjunction with Franklin and other freethinkers, opened a short-lived deistic chapel in Margaret Street, London (1776), where there was used a "Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality."<sup>5</sup>

### § 15

On the other hand, apart from the revival of popular religion under Whitefield and Wesley, which won multitudes of the people

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet of 1778, printing the sermon, with reply to a local attack.

<sup>2</sup> MS. alteration in print. See also p. 1 of Epistle Dedicatory.

<sup>3</sup> In criticizing whom Sir Leslie Stephen barely notices his scientific work, but dwells much on his religious fallacies—a course which would make short work of the fame of Newton.

<sup>4</sup> A Church dignitary has described Evanson's *Dissonance* as "the commencement of the destructive criticism of the Fourth Gospel" (Archdeacon Watkins's *Bampton Lectures*, 1890, p. 174).

<sup>5</sup> Williams (d. 1816), who published 3 vols. of "Lectures on Education" and other works, has a longer claim on remembrance as the founder of the "Literary Fund."



whom no higher culture could reach, there was no recovery of educated belief upon intellectual lines; though there was a steady detachment of energy to the new activities of conquest and commerce which mark the second half of the eighteenth century in England. On this state of things supervened the massive performance of the greatest historical writer England had yet produced, GIBBON, educated not by Oxford but by the recent scholarly literature of France, had as a mere boy seen, on reading Bossuet, the theoretic weakness of Protestantism, and had straightway professed Romanism. Shaken as to that by a skilled Swiss Protestant, he speedily became a rationalist pure and simple, with as little of the dregs of deism in him as any writer of his age; and his great work begins, or rather signalizes (since Hume and Robertson preceded him), a new era of historical writing, not merely by its sociological treatment of the rise of Christianity, but by its absolutely anti-theological handling of all things.

The importance of the new approach may be at once measured by the zeal of the opposition. In no case, perhaps, has the essentially passionate character of religious resistance to new thought been more vividly shown than in that of the contemporary attacks upon Gibbon's *History*. There is not to be found in controversial literature such another annihilating rejoinder as was made by Gibbon to the clerical zealots who undertook to confound him on points of scholarship, history, and ratiocination. The contrast between the mostly spiteful incompetence of the attack and the finished mastery of the reply put the faith at a disadvantage from which it never intellectually recovered, though other forces reinstated it socially. By the admission of Macaulay, who thought Gibbon "most unfair" to religion, the whole troupe of his assailants are now "utterly forgotten"; and those orthodox commentators who later sought to improve on their criticism have in turn, with a notable uniformity, been rebutted by their successors; till Gibbon's critical section ranks as the first systematically scientific handling of the problem of the rise of Christianity. He can be seen to have profited by all the relevant deistic work done before him, learning alike from Toland, from Middleton, and from Bolingbroke; though his acknowledgments are mostly paid to respectable Protestants and Catholics, as Basnage, Beausobre, Lardner, Mosheim, and Tillemont; and the sheer solidity of the work has sustained it against a hundred years of hostile comment.<sup>1</sup> While Gibbon was thus earning for his

<sup>1</sup> The subject is discussed at length in the essay on Gibbon in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*.

country a new literary distinction, the orthodox interest was concerned above all things to convict him of ignorance, incompetence, and dishonesty; and Davis, the one of his assailants who most fully manifested all of these qualities, and who will long be remembered solely from Gibbon's deadly exposure, was rewarded with a royal pension. Another, Apthorp, received an archiepiscopal living; while Chelsum, the one who almost alone wrote against him like a gentleman, got nothing. But no cabal could avail to prevent the instant recognition, at home and abroad, of the advent of a new master in history; and in the worst times of reaction which followed, the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* impassively defied the claims of the ruling creed.

In a literary world which was eagerly reading Gibbon<sup>1</sup> and Voltaire,<sup>2</sup> there was a peculiar absurdity in Burke's famous question (1790) as to "Who now reads Bolingbroke" and the rest of the older deists.<sup>3</sup> The fashionable public was actually reading Bolingbroke even then;<sup>4</sup> and the work of the older deists was being done with new incisiveness and thoroughness by their successors.<sup>5</sup> In the unstudious world of politics, if the readers were few the indifferentists were many. Evanson could truthfully write to Bishop Hurd in 1777 that "That general unbelief of revealed religion among the higher orders of our countrymen, which, however your Lordship and I might differ in our manner of accounting for it, is too notorious for either of us to doubt of, hath, by a necessary consequence, produced in the majority of our present legislators an absolute indifference towards religious questions of every kind."<sup>6</sup> Beside Burke in Parliament, all the while, was the Prime Minister, WILLIAM PITT the younger, an agnostic deist.

Whether or not the elder Pitt was a deist, the younger gave very plain signs of being at least no more. Gladstone (*Studies subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, ed. 1896, pp. 30-33) has sought to discredit the recorded testimony of Wilberforce (*Life of Wilberforce*, 1838, i, 98) that Pitt told him "Bishop

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Bishop Watson's *Apology for Christianity* (1776) as to the vogue of unbelief at that date. (*Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 121. Cp. pp. 179, 399.)

<sup>2</sup> The panegyric on Voltaire delivered at his death by Frederick the Great (Nov. 26, 1778) was promptly translated into English (1779).

<sup>3</sup> *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> See Hannah More's letter of April, 1777, in her *Life*, abridged 16mo-ed. p. 36. An edition of Shaftesbury, apparently, appeared in 1773, and another in 1790.

<sup>5</sup> The essays of Hume, including the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1779), were now circulated in repeated editions. Mr. Rae, in his valuable *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 311, cites a German observer, Wendeborn, as writing in 1785 that the *Dialogues*, though a good deal discussed in Germany, had made no sensation in England, and were at that date entirely forgotten. But a second edition had been called for in 1779, and they were added to a fresh edition of the essays in 1788. Any "forgetting" is to be set down to preoccupation with other interests.

<sup>6</sup> *Letter to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry*, 1777, p. 3.



Butler's work raised in his mind more doubts than it had answered." Gladstone points to another passage in Wilberforce's diary which states that Pitt "commended Butler's *Analogy*" (*Life*, i, 90). But the context shows that Pitt had commended the book for the express purpose of turning Wilberforce's mind from its evangelical bias. Wilberforce was never a deist, and the purpose accordingly could not have been to make him orthodox. The two testimonies are thus perfectly consistent; especially when we note the further statement credibly reported to have been made by Wilberforce (*Life*, i, 95), that Pitt later "tried to reason me out of my convictions." We have yet further the emphatic declaration of Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, that he "never went to church in his life..... never even talked about religion" (*Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1845, iii, 166-67). This was said in emphatic denial of the genuineness of the unctuous death-bed speech put in Pitt's mouth by Gifford. Lady Hester's high veracity is accredited by her physician (*Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1846, i, pref. p. 11). No such character can be given to the conventional English biography of the period.

We have further to note the circumstantial account by Wilberforce in his letter to the Rev. S. Gisborne immediately after Pitt's death (*Correspondence*, 1840, ii, 69-70), giving the details he had had in confidence from the Bishop of Lincoln. They are to the effect that, after some demur on Pitt's part ("that he was not worthy to offer up any prayer, or was too weak,") the Bishop prayed with him once. Wilberforce adds his "fear" that "no further religious intercourse took place before or after, and I own I thought what was inserted in the papers impossible to be true."

There is clear testimony that Charles James Fox, Pitt's illustrious rival, was no more of a believer than he,<sup>1</sup> though equally careful to make no profession of unbelief. And it was Fox who, above all the English statesmen of his day, fought the battle of religious toleration<sup>2</sup>—a service which finally puts him above Burke, and atones for many levities of political action.

Among thinking men too the nascent science of geology was setting up a new criticism of "revelation"—this twenty years before the issue of the epoch-making works of Hutton.<sup>3</sup> In England the impulse seems to have come from the writings of the Abbé Langlet du Fresnoy, De Maillet, and Mirabaud, challenging the Biblical

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Parr, *Characters of C. J. Fox*, i, 220; cited in *Charles James Fox, a Commentary*, by W. S. Landor, ed. by S. Wheeler, 1907, p. 147. Fox's secretary and biographer, Trotter, while anxious to discredit the statement of Parr, gives such a qualified account (*Memoirs of the Latter Years of C. J. Fox*, 1811, pp. 470-71) of Fox's views on immortality as to throw much doubt on the stronger testimony of B. C. Walpole (*Recollections of C. J. Fox*, 1806, p. 242).

<sup>2</sup> See J. L. Le B. Hammond, *Charles James Fox*, 1903, ch. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> See a letter in Bishop Watson's *Life*, i, 402; and cp. Buckle, ch. vii, note 218.

account of the antiquity of the earth. The new phase of "infidelity" was of course furiously denounced, one of the most angry and most absurd of its opponents being the poet Cowper.<sup>1</sup> Still rationalism persisted. Paley, writing in 1786, protests that "Infidelity is now served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile the imagination, in a fable, a tale, a novel, or a poem, in interspersed or broken hints, remote and oblique surmises, in books of travel, of philosophy, of natural history—in a word, in any form rather than that of a professed and regular disquisition."<sup>2</sup> The orthodox Dr. J. Ogilvie, in the introduction to his *Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Skepticism of the Times* (1783), begins: "That the opinions of the deists and skeptics have spread more universally during a part of the last century and in the present than at any former æra since the resurrection of letters, is a truth to which the friends and the enemies of religion will give their suffrage without hesitation." In short, until the general reversal of all progress which followed on the French Revolution, there had been no such change of opinion as Burke alleged.

One of the most popular poets and writers of the day was the celebrated ERASMUS DARWIN, a deist, whose *Zoonomia* (1794) brought on him the charge of atheism, as it well might. However he might poetize about the Creator, Dr. Darwin in his verse and prose alike laid the foundations of the doctrines of the transmutation of species and the aqueous origin of simple forms of life which evolved into higher forms; though the idea of the descent of man from a simian species had been broached before him by Buffon and Helvétius in France, and Lords Kames and Monboddo in Scotland. The idea of a *Natura naturans* was indeed ancient; but it has been authoritatively said of Erasmus Darwin that "he was the first who proposed and consistently carried out a well-rounded theory with regard to the development of the living world—a merit which shines forth more brilliantly when we compare it with the vacillating and confused attempts of Buffon, Linnæus, and Goethe. It is the idea of a power working from within the organisms to improve their natural position"<sup>3</sup>—the idea which, developed by Lamarck, was modified by the great Darwin of the nineteenth century into the doctrine of natural selection.

And in the closing years of the century there arose a new promise of higher life in the apparition of MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT,

<sup>1</sup> See his *Task*, bk. iii, 150-90 (1783-1784), for the prevailing religious tone.

<sup>2</sup> *Princ. of Moral Philos.* bk. v, ch. ix. The chapter tells of widespread freethinking.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Krause, *Erasmus Darwin*, Eng. tr. 1879, p. 211. Cp. pp. 193, 194.



ill-starred but noble, whose *Letters on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) show her to have been a freethinking deist of remarkable original faculty,<sup>1</sup> and whose *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was the first great plea for the emancipation of her sex.

## § 16

Even in rural Scotland, the vogue of the poetry of BURNS told of germinal doubt. To say nothing of his mordant satires on pietistic types—notably *Holy Willie's Prayer*, his masterpiece in that line—Burns even in his avowed poems<sup>2</sup> shows small regard for orthodox beliefs; and his letters reveal him as substantially a deist, shading into a Unitarian. Such pieces as *A Prayer in the prospect of Death*, and *A Prayer under the pressure of Violent Anguish*, are plainly unevangelical;<sup>3</sup> and the allusions to Jesus in his letters, even when writing to Mrs. Macle hose, who desired to bring him to confession, exclude orthodox belief,<sup>4</sup> though they suggest Unitarianism. He frequently refers to religion in his letters, yet so constantly restricts himself to the affirmation of a belief in a benevolent God and in a future state that he cannot be supposed to have held the further beliefs which his orthodox correspondents would wish him to express. A rationalistic habit is shown even in his professions of belief, as here: "Still I am a very sincere believer in the Bible; but I am drawn by the conviction of a man, not the halter of an ass";<sup>5</sup> and in the passage: "Though I have no objection to what the Christian system tells us of another world, yet I own I am partial to those proofs and ideas of it which we have wrought out of our own heads and hearts."<sup>6</sup> Withal, Burns always claimed to be "religious," and was so even in a somewhat conventional sense. The lines:

An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange  
For Deity offended<sup>7</sup>

exhibit a sufficiently commonplace conception of Omnipotence; and

<sup>1</sup> Letters vii, viii, ix, xix, xxii.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., *The Ordination*, the *Address to the Deil*, *A Dedication to Gavin Hamilton*, *The Kirk's Alarm*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> See also the pieces printed between these in the Globe edition, pp. 66–68.

<sup>4</sup> The benevolent Supreme Being, he writes, "has put the immediate administration of all this into the hands of Jesus Christ—a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot fathom, but whose relation to us is [that of] a guide and Saviour." Letter 86 in Globe ed. Letters 189 and 197, to Mrs. Dunlop, similarly fail to meet the requirements of the orthodox correspondent. The poem *Look up and See*, latterly printed several times apart from Burns's works, and extremely likely to be his, is a quite Voltairean criticism of David. If the poem be un genuine, it is certainly by far the ablest of the unacknowledged pieces ascribed to him, alike in diction and in purport.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Jan. 1, 1789, in *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 129. The passage is omitted from Letter 168 in the Globe ed., and presumably from other reprints.

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, July 9, 1790. Published for the first time in vol. cited, p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> *Epistle to a Young Friend*.

there is no sign that the poet ever did any hard thinking on the problem. But, emotionalist of genius as he was, his influence as a satirist and mitigator of the crudities and barbarities of Scots religion has been incalculably great, and underlies all popular culture progress in Scotland since his time. Constantly aspersed in his own day and world as an "infidel," he yet from the first conquered the devotion of the mass of his countrymen; though he would have been more potent for intellectual liberation if he had been by them more intelligently read. Few of them now, probably, realize that their adored poet was either a deist or a Unitarian—presumably the former.

## § 17

With the infelicity in prediction which is so much commoner with him than the "prescience" for which he is praised, Burke had announced that the whole deist school "repose in lasting oblivion." The proposition would be much more true of 999 out of every thousand writers on behalf of Christianity. It is characteristic of Burke, however, that he does not name Shaftesbury, a Whig nobleman of the sacred period.<sup>1</sup> A seeming justice was given to Burke's phrase by the undoubted reaction which took place immediately afterwards. In the vast panic which followed on the French Revolution, the multitude of mediocre minds in the middle and upper classes, formerly deistic or indifferent, took fright at unbelief as something now visibly connected with democracy and regicide; new money endowments were rapidly bestowed on the Church; and orthodoxy became fashionable on political grounds just as skepticism had become fashionable at the Restoration. Class interest and political prejudice wrought much in both cases; only in opposite directions. Democracy was no longer Bibliolatrous, therefore aristocracy was fain to become so, or at least to grow respectful towards the Church as a means of social control. Gibbon, in his closing years, went with the stream. And as religious wars have always tended to discredit religion, so a war partly associated with the freethinking of the French revolutionists tended to discredit freethought. The brutish wrecking of Priestley's house and library and chapel by a mob at Birmingham in 1791 was but an extreme

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, writing in 1865, and advancing on Burke, has said of the whole school, including Shaftesbury, that "the shadow of the tomb rests on all: a deep, unbroken silence, the chill of death, surrounds them. They have long ceased to wake any interest" (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 116). As a matter of fact, they had been discussed by Tayler in 1853; by Pattison in 1860; and by Farrar in 1862; and they have since been discussed at length by Dr. Hunt, by Dr. Cairns, by Lange, by Gyzicki, by M. Sayous, by Sir Leslie Stephen, by Prof. Höfding, and by many others.



manifestation of a reaction which affected every form of mental life. But while Priestley went to die in the United States, another English exile, temporarily returned thence to his native land, was opening a new era of popular rationalism. Even in the height of the revolutionary tumult, and while Burke was blustering about the disappearance of unbelief, THOMAS PAINE was laying deep and wide the English foundations of a new democratic freethought; and the upper-class reaction in the nature of the case was doomed to impermanency, though it was to arrest English intellectual progress for over a generation. The French Revolution had re-introduced freethought as a vital issue, even in causing it to be banned as a danger.

That freethought at the end of the century was rather driven inwards and downwards than expelled is made clear by the multitude of fresh treatises on Christian evidences. Growing numerous after 1790, they positively swarm for a generation after Paley (1794). Cp. *Essays on the Evidence and Influence of Christianity*, Bath, 1790, pref.; Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel its own Witness*, 1799, pref. and concluding address to deists; Watson's sermon of 1795, in *Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 399; Priestley's *Memoirs* (written in 1795), 1806, pp. 127-28; Wilberforce's *Practical View*, 1797, *passim* (e.g., pp. 366-69, 8th ed. 1841); Rev. D. Simpson, *A Plea for Religion*..... addressed to the *Disciples of Thomas Paine*, 1797. The latter writer states (2nd ed. p. 126) that "infidelity is at this moment running like wildfire among the common people"; and Fuller (2nd ed. p. 128) speaks of the *Monthly Magazine* as "pretty evidently devoted to the cause of infidelity." A pamphlet on *The Rise and Dissolution of the Infidel Societies in this Metropolis* (London, 1800), by W. Hamilton Reid, describes the period as the first "in which the doctrines of infidelity have been extensively circulated among the lower orders"; and a *Summary of Christian Evidences*, by Bishop Porteous (1800; 16th ed. 1826), affirms, in agreement with the 1799 Report of the Lords' Committee on Treasonable Societies, that "new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on Christianity, are dispersed continually, with indefatigable industry, through every part of the kingdom, and every class of the community." Freethought, in short, was becoming democratized.

As regards England, Paine is the great popular factor; and it is the bare truth to say that he brought into the old debate a new earnestness and a new moral impetus. The first part of the *Age of Reason*, hastily put together in expectation of speedy death in 1793, and including some astronomic matter that apparently antedates 1781,<sup>1</sup> is a swift outline of the position of the rationalizing deist,

<sup>1</sup> Conway, introd. to *Age of Reason*, in his ed. of Paine's Works, iv, 3.

newly conscious of firm standing-ground in astronomic science. That is the special note of Paine's gospel. He was no scholar; and the champions of the "religion of Galilee" have always been prompt to disparage any unlearned person who meddles with religion as an antagonist; but in the second part of his book Paine put hard criticism enough to keep a world of popular readers interested for well over a hundred years. The many replies are forgotten: the Biblical criticism of Paine will continue to do its work till popular orthodoxy follows the lead of professional scholarship and gives up at once the acceptance and the circulation of things incredible and indefensible as sacrosanct.

Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, i, 217) remarks that Paine's New Testament criticisms are "such as at all times would naturally occur to a reader of independent mind and strong common sense." If so, these had been up to Paine's time, and remained long afterwards, rare characteristics. And there is some mistake about Mr. Benn's criticism that "the repeated charges of fraud and imposture brought against the Apostles and Evangelists.....jar painfully on a modern ear. But they are largely due to the mistaken notion, shared by Paine with his orthodox contemporaries, that the Gospels and Acts were written by contemporaries and eye-witnesses of the events related." Many times over, Paine argues that the documents could not have been so written. E.g. in Conway's ed. of Works, pp. 157, 158, 159, 160, 164, 167, 168, etc. The reiterated proposition is "that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what they relate; .....and consequently that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles" (p. 168). And there is some exaggeration even in Mr. Benn's remark that, "strangely enough, he accepts the Book of Daniel as genuine." Paine (ed. p. 144) merely puts a balance of probability in favour of the genuineness. It may be sometimes—it is certainly not always—true that Paine "cannot distinguish between legendary or [? and] mythical narratives" (Benn, p. 216); but it is to be feared that the disability subsists to-day in more scholarly quarters.

Despite his deadly directness, Paine, in virtue of his strong sincerity, probably jars much less on the modern ear than he did on that of his own, which was so ready to make felony of any opinion hostile to reigning prejudices. But if it be otherwise, it is to be feared that no less offence will be given by Mr. Benn's own account of the Hexateuch as "the records kept by a lying and bloodthirsty priesthood"; even if that estimate be followed by the very challengeable admission that "priesthoods are generally distinguished for their superior humanity" (Benn, p. 350, and note).



Henceforth there is a vital difference in the fortunes of free-thought and religion alike. Always in the past the institutional strength of religion and the social weakness of freethought had lain in the credulity of the ignorant mass, which had turned to naught an infinity of rational effort. After the French Revolution, when over a large area the critical spirit began simultaneously to play on faith and life, politics and religion, its doubled activity gave it a new breadth of outlook as of energy, and the slow enlightenment of the mass opened up a new promise for the ultimate reign of reason.

## CHAPTER XVII

## FRENCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. THE fruits of the intellectual movement of the seventeenth century are seen beginning to take form on the very threshold of the eighteenth. In 1700, at the height of the reign of the King's confessors, there was privately printed the *Lettre d'Hippocrate à Damagète*, described as "the first French work openly destructive of Christianity." It was ascribed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers, a pillar of the feudal system.<sup>1</sup> Thus early is the sound of disintegration heard in the composite fabric of Church and State; and various fissures are seen in all parts of the structure. The king himself, so long morally discredited, could only discredit pietism by his adoption of it; the Jansenists and the Molinists [*i.e.*, the school of Molina, not of Molinos] fought incessantly; even on the side of authority there was bitter dissension between Bossuet and Fénelon;<sup>2</sup> and the movement of mysticism associated with the latter came to nothing, though he had the rare credit of converting, albeit to a doubtful orthodoxy, the emotional young Scotch deist Chevalier Ramsay.<sup>3</sup> Where the subtlety of Fénelon was not allowed to operate, the loud dialectic of Bossuet could not avail for faith as against rationalism, whatever it might do to upset the imperfect logic of Protestant sects. In no society, indeed, does mere declamation play a larger part than in that of modern France; but in no society, on the other hand, is mere declamation more sure to be disdained and derided by the keener spirits. In the years of disaster and decadence which rounded off in gloom the life of the Grand Monarque, with defeat dogging his armies and bankruptcy threatening his finances, the

<sup>1</sup> Lemontey, *Hist. de la régence et de la minorité de Louis XV.* 1835, ii, 353, note. In 1731 there was published under the name of Boulainvilliers (d. 1722) a so-called *Réfutation de Spinoza*, which was "really a popular exposition." Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. p. 363. Sir F. Pollock assents to Voltaire's remark that Boulainvilliers "gave the poison and forgot to give the antidote."

<sup>2</sup> For a brief view of the facts, usually misconceived, see Lanson, pp. 610-11. Fénelon seems to have been uncandid, while Bossuet, by common consent, was malevolent. There is probably truth, however, in the view of Shaftesbury (*Characteristics*, ed. 1800, ii, 214), that the real grievance of Fénelon's ecclesiastical opponents was the tendency of his mysticism to withdraw devotees from ceremonial duties.

<sup>3</sup> Now remembered chiefly through the account of his intercourse with Fénelon (repr. in Didot ed. of Fénelon's misc. works), and Hume's long extract from his *Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* in the concluding note to the *Essays*. Cp. M. Matter, *Le Mysticisme en France au temps de Fénelon*, 1865, pp. 352-54.



spirit of criticism was not likely to slacken. Literary polemic, indeed, was hardly to be thought of at such a time, even if it had been safe. In 1709 the king destroyed the Jansenist seminary of Port Royal, wreaking an ignoble vengeance on the very bones of the dead there buried; and more heretical thinkers had need go warily.

Yet even in those years of calamity, perhaps by reason of the very stress of it, some freethinking books somehow passed the press, though a system of police espionage had been built up by the king, step for step with some real reforms in the municipal government of Paris. The first was a romance of the favourite type, in which a traveller discovers a strange land inhabited by surprisingly rational people. Such appear to have been the *Histoire de Calejava*, by Claude Gilbert, produced at Dijon in 1700, and the imaginary travels of Juan de Posos, published at Amsterdam in 1708. Both of these were promptly suppressed; the next contrived to get into circulation. The work of Symon Tyssot de Patot, *Voyages et Aventures de Jacques Massé*, published in 1710, puts in the mouths of priests of the imaginary land discovered by the traveller such mordant arguments against the idea of a resurrection, the story of the fall, and other items of the Christian creed, that there could be small question of the deism of the author;<sup>1</sup> and the prefatory *Lettre de l'éditeur* indicates misgivings. The *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*, by Deslandes, ostensibly published at Amsterdam in 1712, seems to have had a precarious circulation, inasmuch as Brunet never saw the first edition. To permit of the issue of such a book as *Jacques Massé*—even at Bordeaux—the censure must have been notably lax; as it was again in the year of the king's death, when there appeared a translation of Collins's *Discourse of Free-thinking*. For the moment the Government was occupied over an insensate renewal of the old persecution of Protestants, promulgating in 1715 a decree that all who died after refusing the sacraments should be refused burial, and that their goods should be confiscated. The edict seems to have been in large measure disregarded.

2. At the same time the continuous output of apologetics testified to the gathering tide of unbelief. The Benedictine Lami followed up his attack on Spinoza with a more popular treatise, *L'Incrédule amené à la religion par la raison* (1710); the Abbé Genest turned Descartes into verse by way of *Preuves naturelles de l'existence de*

<sup>1</sup> Tyssot de Patot was Professor of Mathematics at Deventer. In his *Lettres choisies*, published in 1726, there is an avowal that "he might be charged with having different notions from those of the vulgar in point of religion" (*New Memoirs of Literature*, iv (1726), 267); and his accounts of pietists and unbelieving and other priests sufficiently convey that impression (*id.* pp. 268-84).

*Dieu et de l'immortalité de l'âme* (1716); and the *Anti-Lucretius* of Cardinal Polignac (1661-1741), though only posthumously published in full (1745), did but pass on to the next age, when deism was the prevailing heresy, a deistic argument against atheism. It is difficult to see any Christian sentiment in that dialectic performance of a born diplomatist.<sup>1</sup>

When the old king died, even the fashion of conformity passed away among the upper classes;<sup>2</sup> and the feverish manufacture of apologetic works testifies to an unslackened activity of unbelief. In 1719 Jean Denyse, professor of philosophy at the college of Montaigu, produced *La vérité de la religion chrétienne démontrée par ordre géométrique* (a title apparently suggested by Spinoza's early exposition of Descartes), without making any permanent impression on heterodox opinion. Not more successful, apparently, was the performance of the Abbé Houteville, first published in 1722.<sup>3</sup> Much more amiable in tone, and more scientific in temper, than the common run of defences, it was found, says an orthodox biographical dictionary, to be "better fitted to make unbelievers than to convert them," seeing that "objections were presented with much force and fulness, and the replies with more amenity than weight."<sup>4</sup> That the Abbé was in fact not rigorously orthodox might almost be suspected from his having been appointed, in the last year of his life (1742), "perpetual secretary" to the Académie, an office which somehow tended to fall to more or less freethinking members, being held before him by the Abbé Dubos, and after him by Mirabaud, the Abbé Duclos,<sup>5</sup> D'Alembert, and Marmontel. The *Traité des Premières Vérités* of the Jesuit Father Buffier (1724) can hardly have been more helpful to the faith.<sup>6</sup> Another experiment by way of popularizing orthodoxy, the copious *Histoire du peuple de Dieu*, by the Jesuit Berruyer, first published in 1728,<sup>7</sup> had little better fortune,

<sup>1</sup> Towards the close of his "poem" Polignac speaks of a defence of Christianity as a future task. He died without even completing the *Anti-Lucretius*, begun half a century before. Of him are related two classic anecdotes. Sent at the age of twenty-seven to discuss Church questions with the Pope, he earned from His Holiness the compliment: "You seem always to be of my opinion; and in the end it is yours that prevails." Louis XIV gave him a long audience, after which the King said: "I have had an interview with a young man who has constantly contradicted me without my being able to be angry for a moment." (*Éloge* prefixed to Bougainville's trans., *L'Anti-Lucretius*, 1767, i, 131.)

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i. Rivarol (*Lettres à Necker*, in *Œuvres*, ed. 1852, p. 138) wrote that under Louis XV there began a "general insurrection" of discussion, and that everybody then talked "only of religion and philosophy during half a century." But this exaggerates the beginnings, of which Rivarol could have no exact knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> *La vérité de la religion chrétienne prouvée par les faits: précédée d'un discours historique et critique sur la méthode des principaux auteurs qui ont écrit pour et contre le christianisme depuis son origine*, 1722. Rep. 1741, 3 vols. 4to., 4 vols. 12mo.

<sup>4</sup> *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique portatif*, 1771, art. HOUTEVILLE, tom. ii.

<sup>5</sup> Whose *Considérations sur les Mœurs* (1751) does not seem to contain a single religious sentiment. Historiographer of France, he had not escaped the suppression of his *Histoire de Louis XI*, 1745.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 130. Buffier seems to have begun an attempt at spelling reform (by dropping doubled letters), followed in 1725 by Huard and later by Prémontval.

<sup>7</sup> 7 vols. 4to., 10 vols. 12mo. Rep. with corrections 1733. Seconde partie, 1753, 8 vols. 12mo.



inasmuch as it scandalized the orthodox by its secularity of tone without persuading the freethinkers. Condemned by the Bishop of Montpellier in 1731, it was censured by Rome in 1734; and the second part, produced long afterwards, aroused even more antagonism.

3. There was thus no adaptation on the side of the Church to the forces which in an increasing degree menaced her rule. Under the regency of Orléans (1715-1723), the open disorder of the court on the one hand and the ruin of the disastrous financial experiment of Law on the other were at least favourable to toleration; but under the Duc de Bourbon, put in power and soon superseded by Fleury (bishop of Fréjus and tutor of Louis XV; later cardinal) there was a renewal of the rigours against the Protestants and the Jansenists; the edict of 1715 was renewed; emigration recommenced; and only public outcry checked the policy of persecution on that side. But Fleury and the king went on fighting the Jansenists; and while this embittered strife of the religious sections could not but favour the growth of freethought, it was incompatible alike with official tolerance of unbelief and with any effectual diffusion of liberal culture. Had the terrorism and the waste of Louis XIV been followed by a sane system of finance and one of religious toleration; and had not the exhausted and bankrupt country been kept for another half century—save for eight years of peace and prosperity from 1748 to 1755—on the rack of ruinous wars, alike under the regency of Orléans and the rule of Louis XV, the intellectual life might have gone fast and far. As it was, war after war absorbed its energy; and the debt of five milliards left by Louis XIV was never seriously lightened. Under such a system the vestiges of constitutional government were gradually swept away.

4. As the new intellectual movement began to find expression, then, it found the forces of resistance more and more organized. In particular, the autocracy long maintained the severest checks on printing, so that freethought could not save by a rare chance attain to open speech. Any book with the least tendency to rationalism had to seek printers, or at least publishers, in Holland. Huard, in publishing his anonymous translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus (1725), is careful to say in his preface that he "makes no application of the Pyrrhonian objections to any dogma that may be called theological"; but he goes on to add that the scandalous quarrels of Christian sects are well fitted to confirm Pyrrhonists in their doubts, the sects having no solid ground on which to condemn each other. As such an assertion was rank heresy, the translation

had to be issued in Amsterdam, and even there without a publisher's name.<sup>1</sup> And still it remains clear that the age of Louis XIV had passed on to the next a heritage of hidden freethinking, as well as one of debt and misgovernment. What takes place thereafter is rather an evolution of and a clerical resistance to a growth known to have begun previously, and always feared and hated, than any new planting of unbelief in orthodox soil. As we have seen, indeed, a part of the early work of skepticism was done by distinguished apologists. Huet, dying in 1722, left for posthumous publication his *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain* (1723). It was immediately translated into English and German; and though it was probably found somewhat superfluous in deistic England, and supersubtle in Lutheran Germany, it helped to prepare the ground for the active unbelief of the next generation in France.

5. A continuous development may be traced throughout the century. MONTESQUIEU, who in his early *Persian Letters* (1721) had revealed himself as "fundamentally irreligious"<sup>2</sup> and a censor of intolerance,<sup>3</sup> proceeded in his masterly little book on the *Greatness and Decadence of the Romans* (1734) and his famous *Spirit of Laws* (1748) to treat the problems of human history in an absolutely secular and scientific spirit, making only such conventional allusions to religion as were advisable in an age in which all heretical works were suppressible.<sup>4</sup> The attempts of La Harpe and Villemain<sup>5</sup> to establish the inference that he repented his youthful levity in the *Persian Letters*, and recognized in Christianity the main pillar of society, will not bear examination. The very passages on which they found<sup>6</sup> are entirely secular in tone and purpose, and tell of no belief.<sup>7</sup> So late as 1751 there appeared a work, *Les Lettres Persanes convaincues d'impiété*, by the Abbé Gaultier. The election of Montesquieu was in fact the beginning of the struggle between the *Philosophe* party in the Academy and their opponents;<sup>8</sup> and in

<sup>1</sup> A reprint in 1735 bears the imprint of London, with the note "Aux dépens de la Compagnie."

<sup>2</sup> Lanson, p. 702. The *Persian Letters*, like the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal, had to be printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam. Their freethinking expressions put considerable difficulties in the way of his election (1727) to the Academy. See E. Edwards, *Chapters of the Biog. Hist. of the French Academy*, 1864, pp. 34-35, and D. M. Robertson, *Hist. of the French Academy*, 1910, p. 92, as to the mystification about the alleged reprint without the obnoxious passages.

<sup>3</sup> Lettre 86. <sup>4</sup> "Au point de vue religieux, Montesquieu tirait poliment son coup de chapeau au christianisme" (Lanson, p. 714). E.g. in the *Esprit des Lois*, liv. xxiv, chs. i, ii, iii, iv, vi, and the footnote to ch. x of liv. xxv. Montesquieu's letter to Warburton (16 mai, 1754), in acknowledgment of that prelate's attack on the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, is a sample of his social make-believe. But no religious reader could suppose it to come from a religious man.

<sup>5</sup> Also of E. Edwards, as cited above. <sup>6</sup> See the notes cited on pp. 405, 407 of Garnier's variorum ed. of the *Esprit des Lois*, 1871. La Harpe and Villemain seem blind to irony.

<sup>7</sup> The flings at Bayle (liv. xxiv, chs. ii, vi) are part of a subtly ironical vindication of ideal as against ecclesiastical Christianity, and they have no note of faith.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, 1857, pp. 61-63.



his own day there was never much doubt about Montesquieu's deism. In his posthumous *Pensées* his anti-clericalism is sufficiently emphatic. "Churchmen," he writes, "are interested in keeping the people ignorant." He expresses himself as a convinced deist, and, with no great air of conviction, as a believer in immortality. But there his faith ends. "I call piety," he says, "a malady of the heart, which plants in the soul a malady of the most ineradicable kind." "The false notion of miracles comes of our vanity, which makes us believe we are important enough for the Supreme Being to upset Nature on our behalf." "Three incredibilities among incredibilities: the pure mechanism of animals [the doctrine of Descartes]; passive obedience; and the infallibility of the Pope."<sup>1</sup> His heresy was of course divined by the guardians of the faith, through all his panegyric of it. Even in his lifetime, Jesuits and Jansenists combined to attack the *Spirit of Laws*, which was denounced at an assembly of the clergy, put on the Roman Index, and prohibited by the censure until Malesherbes came into office in 1750.<sup>2</sup> The Count de Cataneo, a Venetian noble in the service of the King of Prussia, published in French about 1751 a treatise on *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*,<sup>3</sup> in which the political rationalism and the ethical utilitarianism of Cumberland and Grotius were alike repelled as irreconcilable with the doctrine of revelation. It was doubtless because of this atmosphere of hostility that on the death of Montesquieu at Paris, in 1755, Diderot was the only man of letters who attended his funeral,<sup>4</sup> though the Académie performed a commemorative service.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Montesquieu was throughout his life a figure in "good society," and suffered no molestation apart from the outcry against his books. He lived under a tradition of private freethinking and public clericalism, even as did Molière in the previous century; and where the two traditions had to clash, as at interment, the clerical dominion affirmed itself. But even in the Church there were always successors of Gassendi, to wit, philosophic unbelievers, as well as quiet friends of toleration. And it was given to an obscure Churchman to show the way of freethought to a generation of lay combatants.

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées Diverses: De la religion.*

<sup>2</sup> Lanson, p. 714, note.  
<sup>3</sup> Tr. in English, 1753. It is noteworthy that Cataneo formally accepts Montesquieu's professions of orthodoxy.

<sup>4</sup> *Correspondance littéraire de Grimm et Diderot*, ed. 1829-31, i, 273. See the footnote for an account of the indecent efforts of the Jesuits to get at the dying philosopher. The curé of the parish who was allowed entry began his exhortation with: "Vous savez, M. le Président, combien Dieu est grand." "Oui, monsieur," returned Montesquieu, "et combien les hommes sont petits."

<sup>5</sup> Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, p. 63.

6. One of the most comprehensive freethinking works of the century, the *Testament* of JEAN MESLIER, curé of Etrépigny, in Champagne (d. 1723, 1729, or 1733), though it inspired numbers of eighteenth-century freethinkers who read it in manuscript, was never printed till 1861-64. It deserves here some special notice.<sup>1</sup> At his death, by common account, Meslier left two autograph copies of his book, after having deposited a third copy in the archives of the jurisdiction of Sainte-Menehould. By a strange chance one was permitted to circulate, and ultimately there were some hundred copies in Paris, selling at ten louis apiece. As he told on the wrapper of the copy he left for his parishioners, he had not dared to speak out during his life; but he had made full amends. He is recorded to have been an exceptionally charitable priest, devoted to his parishioners, whose interests he indignantly championed against a tyrannous lord of the manor;<sup>2</sup> apropos of Descartes's doctrine of animal automatism, which he fiercely repudiates, he denounces with deep feeling all cruelty to animals, at whose slaughter for food he winces; and his book reveals him as a man profoundly impressed at once by the sufferings of the people under heartless kings and nobles, and the immense imposture of religion which, in his eyes, maintained the whole evil system. Some men before him had impugned miracles, some the gospels, some dogma, some the conception of deity, some the tyranny of kings. He impugns all; and where nearly all the deists had eulogized the character of the Gospel Jesus, the priest envelops it in his harshest invective.

He must have written during whole years, with a sombre, invincible patience, dumbly building up, in his lonely leisure, his unflinching negation of all that the men around him held for sacred, and that he was sworn to preach—the whole to be his testament to his parishioners. In the slow, heavy style—the style of a cart horse, Voltaire called it—there is an indubitable sincerity, a smouldering passion, but no haste, no explosion. The long-drawn, formless, prolix sentences say everything that can be said on their theme; and when the long book was done it was slowly copied, and yet again copied, by the same heavy, unwearying hand. He had read few books, it seems—only the Bible, some of the Fathers, Montaigne, the "Turkish Spy," Naudé, Charron, Pliny, Tournémine on atheism, and Fénelon on the existence of God, with some history, and Moreri's

<sup>1</sup> A full analysis is given by Strauss in the second Appendix to his *Voltaire: Sechs Vorträge*, 2te Aufl. 1870.

<sup>2</sup> The details are dubious. See the memoir compiled by "Rudolf Charles" (R. C. D'Ablaing van Giessenburg), the editor of the *Testament*, Amsterdam, 3 tom, 1861-64. It draws chiefly on the *Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont*, under date Sept. 30, 1764.



Dictionary; but he had re-read them often. He does not cite Bayle; and Montaigne is evidently his chief master. But on his modest reading he had reached as absolute a conviction of the untruth of the entire Judæo-Christian religion as any freethinker ever had. Moved above all by his sense of the corruption and misrule around him, he sets out with a twofold indictment against religion and government, of which each part sustains the other, and he tells his parishioners how he had been "hundreds of times"<sup>1</sup> on the point of bursting out with an indignant avowal of his contempt for the rites he was compelled to administer, and the superstitions he had to inculcate. Then, in a grimly-planned order, he proceeds to demolish, section by section, the whole structure.

Religions in general he exhibits as tissues of error, illusion, and imposture, the endless sources of troubles and strifes for men. Their historical proofs and documentary bases are then assailed, and the gospels in particular are ground between the slow mill-stones of his dialectic; miracles, promises, and prophecies being handled in turn. The ethic and the doctrine are next assailed all along the line, from their theoretic bases to their political results; and the kings of France fare no better than their creed. As against the theistic argument of Fénelon, the entire theistic system is then oppugned, sometimes with precarious erudition, generally with cumbrous but solid reasoning; and the eternity of matter is affirmed with more than Averroistic conviction, the Cartesians coming in for a long series of heavy blows. Immortality is further denied, as miracles had been; and the treatise ends with a stern affirmation of its author's rectitude, and, as it were, a massive gesture of contempt for all that will be said against him when he has passed into the nothingness which he is nearing. "I have never committed any crime," he writes,<sup>2</sup> "nor any bad or malicious action: I defy any man to make me on this head, with justice, any serious reproach"; but he quotes from the Psalms, with grim zest, phrases of hate towards workers of iniquity. There is not even the hint of a smile at the astonishing bequest he was laying up for his parishioners and his country. He was sure he would be read, and he was right. The whole polemic of the next sixty years, the indictment of the government no less than that of the creed, is laid out in his sombre treatise.

To the general public, however, he was never known save by the "Extract"—really a deistic adaptation—made by Voltaire,<sup>3</sup> and the

<sup>1</sup> *Testament*, as cited, i, 25.

<sup>2</sup> iii, 396.

<sup>3</sup> First published in 1762 [or 1764? See Bachaumont, Oct. 30], with the date 1742; and reprinted in the *Évangile de la Raison*, 1764. It was no fewer than four times ordered to be destroyed in the Restoration period.

re-written summary by d'Holbach and Diderot entitled *Le Bon Sens du Curé Meslier* (1772).<sup>1</sup> Even this publicity was delayed for a generation, since Voltaire, who heard of the *Testament* as early as 1735, seems to have made no use of it till 1762. But the entire group of fighting freethinkers of the age was in some sense inspired by the old priest's legacy.

7. Apart from this direct influence, too, others of the cloth bore some part in the general process of enlightenment. A good type of the agnostic priest of the period was the Abbé Terrasson, the author of the philosophic romance *Sethos* (1732), who died in 1750. Not very judicious in his theory of human evolution (which he represented as a continuous growth from a stage of literary infancy, seen in Homer), he adopted the Newtonian theory at a time when the entire Academy stood by Cartesianism. Among his friends he tranquilly avowed his atheism.<sup>2</sup> He died "without the sacraments," and when asked whether he believed all the doctrine of the Church, he replied that for him that was not possible.<sup>3</sup> Another anti-clerical Abbé was Gaidi, whose poem, *La Religion à l'Assemblée du Clergé de France* (1762), was condemned to be burned.<sup>4</sup>

Among or alongside of such disillusioned Churchmen there must have been a certain number who, desiring no breach with the organization to which they belonged, saw the fatal tendency of the spirit of persecution upon which its rulers always fell back in their struggle with freethought, and sought to open their eyes to the folly and futility of their course. Freethinkers, of course, had to lead the way, as we have seen. It was the young Turgot who in 1753 published two powerful *Lettres sur la tolérance*, and in 1754 a further series of admirable *Lettres d'un ecclésiastique à un magistrat*, pleading the same cause.<sup>5</sup> But similar appeals were anonymously made, by a clerical pen, at a moment when the Church was about to enter on a new and exasperating conflict with the growing band of freethinking writers who rallied round Voltaire. The small book of *Questions sur la tolérance*, ascribed to the Abbé Tailhé or Tailhié and the canonist Maultrot (Geneva, 1758), is conceived in the very spirit of rationalism, yet with a careful concern to persuade the clergy to sane courses, and is to this day worth reading as a utilitarian argument. But the

<sup>1</sup> Probably Diderot did the most of the adaptation. "Il y a plus que du bon sens dans ce livre," writes Voltaire to D'Alembert; "il est terrible. S'il sort de la boutique du *Système de la Nature*, l'auteur s'est bien perfectionné" (Lettre de 27 Juillet, 1775).

<sup>2</sup> "Il leur faut un Être à ces messieurs; pour moi, je m'en passe." Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire*, ed. 1829-31, iv, 186.

<sup>3</sup> Grimm, as cited, i, 235. Grimm tells a delightful story of his reception of the confessor. "Cet ouvrage, dont les vers sont grands et bien tournés, est une satire des plus licencieuses contre les mœurs de nos évêques." Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, Juin 15, 1762.

<sup>5</sup> Bonet-Maury, *Hist. de la lib. de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 68.



Church was not fated to be led by such light. The principle of toleration was left to become the watchword of freethought, while the Church identified herself collectively with that of tyranny.

Anecdotes of the time reveal the coincidence of tyranny and evasion, intolerance and defiance. Of Nicolas Boindin (1676-1751), procureur in the royal Bureau des Finances, who was received into the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres in 1706, it is told that he "would have been received in the French Academy if the public profession he made of being an atheist had not excluded him."<sup>1</sup> But the publicity was guarded. When he conversed with the young Marmontel<sup>2</sup> and others at the Café Procope, they used a conversational code in which the soul was called *Margot*, religion *Javotte*, liberty *Jeanneton*, and the deity *Monsieur de l'Être*. Once a listener of furtive aspect asked Boindin who might be this Monsieur de l'Être who behaved so ill, and with whom they were so displeased? "Monsieur," replied Boindin, "he is a police spy"—such being the avocation of the questioner.<sup>3</sup> "The morals of Boindin," says a biographical dictionary of the period, "were as pure as those of an atheist can be; his heart was generous; but to these virtues he joined presumption and the obstinacy which follows from it, a *bizarre* humour, and an unsociable character."<sup>4</sup> Other testimonies occur on the first two heads, not on the last. But he was fittingly refused "Christian" interment, and was buried by night, "sans pompe."

8. With the ground prepared as we have seen, freethought was bound to progress in France in the age of Louis XV; but it chanced that the lead fell into the hands of the most brilliant and fecund of all the writers of the century. VOLTAIRE<sup>5</sup> (1694-1778) was already something of a freethinker when a mere child. So common was deism already become in Paris at the end of the seventeenth century that his godfather, an abbé, is said to have taught him, at the age of three, a poem by J. B. ROUSSEAU,<sup>6</sup> then privately circulated, in which Moses in particular and religious revelations in general are derided as fraudulent.<sup>7</sup> Knowing this poem by heart in his child-

<sup>1</sup> *Nouveau dictionnaire historique-portatif*.....par une Société de Gens de Lettres, ed. 1771, i, 314.

<sup>2</sup> Marmontel does not relate this in his *Mémoires*, where he insists on the decorum of the talk, even at d'Holbach's table. <sup>3</sup> Chamfort, *Caractères et Anecdotes*.

<sup>4</sup> *Nouveau dictionnaire*, above cited, i, 315.

<sup>5</sup> Name assumed for literary purposes, and probably composed by anagram from the real name AROUET, with "le jeune" (junior) added, thus: A. R. O. V. E. T. L(e). I(eune).

<sup>6</sup> Not to be confounded with the greater and later Jean Jacques Rousseau. J. B. Rousseau became Voltaire's bitter enemy—on the score, it is said, of the young man's epigram on the elder poet's "Ode to Posterity," which, he said, would not reach its address. Himself a rather ribald freethinker, Rousseau professed to be outraged by the irreligion of Voltaire.

<sup>7</sup> See the poem in note 4 to ch. ii of Duvernet's *Vie de Voltaire*. Duvernet calls it "one of the first attacks on which philosophy in France had ventured against superstition" (*Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1797, p. 19).

hood, the boy was well on the way to his life's work. It is on record that many of his school-fellows were, like himself, already deists, though his brother, a juvenile Jansenist, made vows to propitiate the deity on the small unbeliever's behalf.<sup>1</sup> It may have been a general reputation for audacious thinking that led to his being charged with the authorship of a stinging philippic published in 1715, after the death of Louis XIV. The unknown author, a young man, enumerated the manifold abuses and iniquities of the reign, concluding: "I have seen all these, and I am not twenty years old." Voltaire was then twenty-two; but D'Argenson, who in the poem had been called "the enemy of the human race," finding no likelier author for the verses, put him under surveillance and exiled him from Paris; and on his imprudent return imprisoned him for nearly a year in the Bastille (1716), releasing him only when the real author of the verses avowed himself. Unconquerable then as always, Voltaire devoted himself in prison to his literary ambitions, planning his *Henriade* and completing his *Œdipe*, which was produced in 1718 with signal success.

Voltaire was thus already a distinguished young poet and dramatist when, in 1726, after enduring the affronts of an assault by a nobleman's lacqueys, and of imprisonment in the Bastille for seeking amends by duel, he came to England, where, like Deslandes before him, he met with a ready welcome from the freethinkers.<sup>2</sup> Four years previously, in the powerful poem, *For and Against*,<sup>3</sup> he had put his early deistic conviction in a vehement impeachment of the immoral creed of salvation and damnation, making the declaration, "I am not a Christian." Thus what he had to learn in England was not deism, but the physics of Newton and the details of the deist campaign against revelationism; and these he mastered.<sup>4</sup> Not only was he directly and powerfully influenced by Bolingbroke, who became his intimate friend, but he read widely in the philo-

<sup>1</sup> Duvernet, ch. ii. The free-hearted NINON DE L'ENCLOS, brightest of old ladies, is to be numbered among the pre-Voltairean freethinkers, and to be remembered as leaving young Voltaire a legacy to buy books. She refused to "sell her soul" by turning devotee on the invitation of her old friend Madame de Maintenon. Madame D'Epinay, Voltaire's "belle philosophe et aimable Habacuc," Madame du Deffand, and Madame Geoffrin were among the later freethinking *grandes dames* of the Voltairean period; and so, presumably, was the Madame de Créqui, quoted by Rivarol, who remarked that "Providence" is "the baptismal name of Chance." As to Madame Geoffrin see the *Œuvres Posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i, 240, 271; and the *Mémoires de Marmontel*, 1804, ii, 102 sq. If Marmontel is accurate, she went secretly at times to mass (p. 104).

<sup>2</sup> Deslandes wrote some new chapters of his *Réflexions* in London, for the English translation. Eng. tr. 1713, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Pour et Contre, ou Épitre à Uranie*. It was of course not printed till long afterwards. Diderot, writing his *Promenade du Sceptique* in 1747, says: "C'est, je crois, dans l'allée des fleurs [of his allegory] entre le champagne et le tokay, que l'épître à Uranie prit naissance." (*L'Allée des Maronniers*, ad init.) This seems unjust.

<sup>4</sup> He has been alternately represented as owing everything and owing very little to England. Cp. Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 58. Neither view is just.



sophic, scientific, and deistic English literature of the day,<sup>1</sup> and went back to France, after three years' stay, not only equipped for his ultimate battle with tyrannous religion, but deeply impressed by the moral wholesomeness of free discussion.<sup>2</sup> Not all at once, indeed, did he become the mouthpiece of critical reason for his age: his literary ambitions were primarily on the lines of *belles lettres*, and secondarily on those of historical writing. After his *Pour et Contre*, his first freethinking production was the not very heretical *Lettres philosophiques* or *Lettres anglaises*, written in England in 1728, and, after circulating in MS., published in five editions in 1734; and the official burning of the book by the common hangman, followed by the imprisonment of the bookseller in the Bastille,<sup>3</sup> was a sufficient check on such activity for the time. Save for the jests about Adam and Eve in the *Mondain* (1736), a slight satire for which he had to fly from Paris; and the indirect though effective thrusts at bigotry in the *Ligue* (1723; later the *Henriade*); in the tragedy of *Mahomet* (1739; printed in 1742), in the tales of *Memnon* and *Zadig* (1747-48), and in the *Idées de La Mothe le Vayer* (1751) and the *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke* (1752), he produced nothing else markedly deistic till 1755, when he published the "Poem to the King of Prussia," otherwise named *Sur la loi naturelle* (which appears to have been written in 1751, while he was on a visit to the Margravine of Bayreuth), and that on the Earthquake of Lisbon. So definitely did the former poem base all morality on natural principles that it was ordered to be burned by the Parlement of Paris, then equally alarmed at freethinking and at Molinism.<sup>4</sup> And so impossible was it still in France to print any specific criticism of Christianity that when in 1759 he issued his verse translations of the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes they also were publicly burned, though he had actually softened instead of heightening the eroticism of the first and the "materialism" of the second.<sup>5</sup>

9. It is thus a complete mistake on the part of Buckle to affirm that the activity of the French reformers up to 1750 was directed

<sup>1</sup> In his *Essay upon the Civil Wars of France, and.....upon Epick Poetry* (2nd ed. 1729, "corrected by himself"), written and published in English, he begins his "Advertisement" with the remark: "It has the appearance of too great a presumption in a traveller who hath been but eighteen months in England, to attempt to write in a language which he cannot pronounce at all, and which he hardly understands in conversation." As the book is remarkably well written, he must have read much English.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Morley (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 40) speaks of the English people as having then won "a full liberty of thought and speech and person." This, as we have seen, somewhat overstates the case. But discussion was much more nearly free than in France.

<sup>3</sup> Probably as much on political as on religious grounds. The 8th letter, *Sur le Parlement*, must have been very offensive to the French Government; and in 1739, moved by angry criticisms, Voltaire saw fit to modify its language. See Lanson's ed. of the *Lettres*, 1909, i, 92, 110.

<sup>4</sup> Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1792, p. 92. In reprints the poem was entitled *Sur la religion naturelle*, and was so commonly cited.

<sup>5</sup> Condorcet, p. 99.

against religion, and that it was thereafter turned against the State. Certainly there was much freethinking among instructed men and others, but it proceeded, as under Louis XIV, mainly by way of manuscripts and conversation, or at best by the circulation of English books and a few translations of these; and only guardedly before 1745 by means of published French books.<sup>1</sup> The Abbé Ranchon, in his MS. Life of Cardinal Fleury, truly says that "the time of the Regency was a period of the spirit of dissoluteness and irreligion"; but when he ascribes to "those times" many "licentious and destructive writings" he can specify only those of the English deists. "Precisely in the time of the Regency a multitude of those offensive and irreligious books were brought over the sea: France was deluged with them."<sup>2</sup> It is incredible that multitudes of Frenchmen read English in the days of the Regency. French freethinkers like Saint Evremond and Deslandes, who visited or sojourned in London before 1715, took their freethought there with them; and the only translations then in print were those of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking* and Shaftesbury's essays on the Use of Ridicule and on Enthusiasm. Apart from these, the only known French freethinking book of the Regency period was the work of Vroes, a councillor at the court of Brabant, on the *Spirit of Spinoza*, reprinted as *Des trois imposteurs*. Meslier died not earlier than 1729; the *Histoire de la philosophie payenne* of Burigny belongs to 1724; the *Lettres philosophiques* of Voltaire to 1734; the earlier works of d'Argens to 1737-38; the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*, edited by Dumarsais, to 1743; and the militant treatise of De la Serre, best known as the *Examen de la Religion*, to 1745.

The ferment thus kept up was indeed so great that about 1748 the ecclesiastical authorities decided on the remarkable step of adopting for their purposes the apologetic treatise adapted by Jacob Vernet, professor of *belles lettres* at Geneva, from the works of Jean-Alphonse Turretin,<sup>3</sup> not only a Protestant but a substantially Socinian professor of ecclesiastical history at the same university. The treatise is itself a testimony to the advance of rationalism in the Protestant world; and its adoption, even under correction, by the Catholic Church in France tells of a keen consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 213-14, as to the works of Boulainvilliers, Tyssot de Patot, Deslandes, and others who wrote between 1700 and 1715.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Schlosser, *Hist. of the Eighteenth Century*, Eng. tr. i, 146-47.

<sup>3</sup> *Traité de la vérité de la religion chrétienne*, tiré en partie du latin de M. J. Alphonse Turretin, professeur.....en l'académie de Genève, par M. J. Vernet, professeur de belles-lettres en la même Académie. Revue et corrigé par un Théologien Catholique. 1e éd. Genève, 1730. Rep. in 2 tom. 1753. Ecclesiastical approbation given 15 janv. 1749; privilège, juillet, 1751.



need. But the dreaded advance, as we have seen, was only to a small extent yet traceable by new literature. The *Examen critique des apologistes de la religion chrétienne* of Lévesque de Burigny was probably written about 1732, and then and thereafter circulated in manuscript, but it was not published till 1766; and even in manuscript its circulation was probably small, though various apologetic works had testified to the increasing uneasiness of the orthodox world. Such titles as *La religion chrétienne démontrée par la Resurrection* (by Armand de la Chapelle, 1728) and *La religion chrétienne prouvée par l'accomplissement des prophéties* (by Père Baltus, 1728) tell of private unbelief under the Regency. In 1737 appeared the voluminous treatise (anonymous) of the Abbé de la Chambre, *Traité de la véritable religion contre les athées, les déistes, etc.* (5 vols.). In 1747, again, there appeared a learned, laborious, and unintelligent work in three volumes (authorized in 1742), *Le Libertinage combattu par la témoignage des auteurs profanes*, by an unnamed Benedictine<sup>1</sup> of the Congregation of St. Vanne. It declares that, between atheism and deism, there has never been so much unbelief as now; but it cites no modern books, and is devoted to arraying classic arguments in support of theism and morals. Part of the exposition consists in showing that Epicurus, Lucian, and Euripides, whom modern atheists are wont to cite as their masters, were not and could not have been atheists; and the pious author roundly declares in favour of paganism as against atheism.

So much smoke tells of fire; but only in 1745 and 1746 did the printed *Examen* of De la Serre and the *Pensées philosophiques* of Diderot begin to build up in France the modern school of critical and philosophic deism. When in 1751 the Abbé Gauchat began his series of *Lettres critiques*, he set out by attacking Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques*, Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, the anonymous *Discours sur la vie heureuse* (1748), *Les Mœurs*<sup>2</sup> (1748), and Pope's *Essay on Man*; taking up in his second volume the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu (1721), and other sets of *Lettres* written in imitation of them. In the third volume he has nothing more aggressive of Voltaire's to deal with than *La Henriade*, the *Mahomet*, and some of his fugitive pieces. And the Bishop of Puy, writing in 1754 his *La Dévotion conciliée avec l'esprit*, could say to the faithful: "You live in an age fertile in pretended *esprits forts*, who, too weak nevertheless to attack in front an invincible religion, skirmish lightly around it, and in default of the reasons they lack,

<sup>1</sup> Dom Remi Desmonts, according to Barbier.

<sup>2</sup> "Par Panage" (= Toussaint?). Rep. 1755 and 1767 (Berlin).

employ raillery."<sup>1</sup> The chivalrous bishop knew perfectly well that had a serious attack been published author and publisher would have been sent if possible to the Bastille, if not to the scaffold. But his evidence is explicit. There is here no recognition of any literary bombardment, though there was certainly an abundance of unbelief.<sup>2</sup>

Buckle has probably mistaken the meaning of the summing up of some previous writer to the effect that up to 1750 or a few years later the political opposition to the Court was religious, in the sense of ecclesiastical or sectarian (Jansenist),<sup>3</sup> and that it afterwards turned to matters of public administration.<sup>4</sup> It would be truer to say that the early *Lettres philosophiques*, the reading of which later made the boy Lafayette a republican at nine, were a polemic for political and social freedom, and as such a more direct criticism of the French administrative system than Voltaire ever penned afterwards, save in the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* (1750). In point of fact, as will be shown below, only some twenty scattered freethinking works had appeared in French up to 1745, almost none of them directly attacking Christian beliefs; and, despite the above-noted sallies of Voltaire, Condorcet comes to the general conclusion that it was the hardihood of Rousseau's deism in the "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" in his *Émile* (1762) that spurred Voltaire to new activity.<sup>5</sup> This is perhaps not quite certain; there is some reason to believe that his "Sermon of the Fifty," his "first frontal attack on Christianity,"<sup>6</sup> was written a year before; but in any case that and other productions of his at once left Rousseau far in the rear. Even now he had no fixed purpose of continuous warfare against so powerful and cruel an enemy as the Church, which in 1757 had actually procured an edict pronouncing the death penalty against all writers of works attacking religion; though the fall of the Jesuits in 1764 raised new hopes of freedom. But when, after that hopeful episode, there began a new movement of Jansenist fanaticism; and when, after the age of religious savagery had seemed to be over, there began a new series of religious atrocities in France

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, ed. 1755, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> A glimpse of old Paris before or about 1750 is afforded by Fontenelle's remark that the prevailing diseases might be known from the *affiches*. At every street corner were to be seen two, of which one advertised a *Traité sur l'incrédulité*. (Grimm, *Corr. litt.* iii, 373.)

<sup>3</sup> Thus Duruy had said in his *Histoire de France* (1st ed. 1852) that in the work of the Jansenists of Port Royal "l'esprit d'opposition politique se cacha sous l'opposition religieuse" (ed. 1880, ii, 298).

<sup>4</sup> The case has been thus correctly put by M. Rocquain, who, however, decides that "de religieuse qu'elle était, l'opposition devient politique" as early as about 1724-1733. *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878; *table des matières*, liv. 2e. Duruy (last note) puts the tendency still earlier.

<sup>5</sup> "Cette hardiesse étonna Voltaire, et excita son émulation" (ed. cited, p. 118).

<sup>6</sup> *Avertissement des éditeurs*, in Basle ed. of 1792, vol. xlv, p. 92.



itself (1762-66), he girded on a sword that was not to be laid down till his death.

Even so late as 1768, in his last letter to Damilaville (8 fév.), Voltaire expresses a revulsion against the aggressive freethought propaganda of the time which is either one of his epistolary stratagems or the expression of a nervous reaction in a time of protracted bad health. "Mes chagrins redoublent," he writes, "par la quantité incroyable d'écrits contre la religion chrétienne, qui se succèdent aussi rapidement en Hollande que les gazettes et les journaux." His enemies have the barbarism to impute to him, at his age, "une partie de ces extravagances composées par de jeunes gens et par des moines défroqués." His immediate ground for chagrin may have been the fact that this outbreak of anti-Christian literature was likely to thwart him in the campaign he was then making to secure justice to the Sirven family as he had already vindicated that of Calas. Sirven barely missed the fate of the latter.

The misconception of Buckle, above discussed, has been widely shared even among students. Thus Lord Morley, discussing the "Creed of the Savoyard Vicar" in Rousseau's *Émile* (1762), writes that "Souls weary of the fierce mockeries that had so long been flying like fiery shafts against the far Jehovah of the Hebrews, and the silent Christ of the later doctors and dignitaries," may well have turned to it with ardour (*Rousseau*, ed. 1886, ii, 266). He further speaks of the "superiority of the sceptical parts of the Savoyard Vicar's profession.....over the biting mockeries which Voltaire had made the fashionable method of assault" (p. 294). No specifications are offered, and the chronology is seen to be astray. The only mockeries which Voltaire could be said to have made fashionable before 1760 were those of his *Lettres philosophiques*, his *Mondain*, his *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke*, and his philosophically humorous tales, as *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Micromégas*, etc.: all his distinctive attacks on Judaism and Christianity were yet to come. [The Abbé Guyon, in his *L'Oracle des nouveaux philosophes* (Berne, 1759-60, 2 tom.), proclaims an attack on doctrines taught "dans les livres de nos beaux esprits" (Avert. p. xi); but he specifies only denials of (1) revelation, (2) immortality, and (3) the Biblical account of man's creation; and he is largely occupied with Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, though his book is written at Voltaire. The second volume is devoted to *Candide* and the *Précis* of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon—not very fierce performances.] Lord Morley, as it happens, does not make this chronological mistake in his earlier work on Voltaire, where he rightly represents him as beginning his attack on "the Infamous" after he had settled at Ferney (1758). His "fierce mockeries" begin at the earliest

in 1761. The mistake may have arisen through taking as true the fictitious date of 1736 for the writing of the *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*. It belongs to 1767. Buckle's error, it may be noted, is repeated by so careful a student as Dr. Redlich, *Local Government in England*, Eng. tr. 1903, i, 64.

10. The rest of Voltaire's long life was a sleepless and dexterous warfare, by all manner of literary stratagem,<sup>1</sup> facilitated by vast literary fame and ample acquired wealth, against what he called "the Infamous"—the Church and the creed which he found still swift to slay for mere variation of belief, and slow to let any good thing be wrought for the bettering of men's lives. Of his prodigious literary performance it is probably within the truth to say that in respect of rapid influence on the general intelligence of the world it has never been equalled by any one man's writing; and that, whatever its measure of error and of personal misdirection, its broader influence was invariably for peace on earth, for tolerance among men, and for reason in all things. His faults were many, and some were serious; but to no other man of his age, save possibly Beccaria, can be attributed so much beneficent accomplishment. He can perhaps better be estimated as a force than as a man. So great was the area of his literary energy that he is inevitably inadequate at many points. Lessing could successfully impugn him in drama; Diderot in metaphysic; Gibbon in history; and it is noteworthy that all of these men<sup>2</sup> at different times criticized him with asperity, testing him by the given item of performance, and disparaging his personality. Yet in his own way he was a greater power than any of them; and his range, as distinguished from his depth, outgoes theirs. In sum, he was the greatest mental fighter of his age, perhaps of any age: in that aspect he is a "power-house" not to be matched in human history; and his polemic is mainly for good. It was a distinguished English academic who declared that "civilization owes more to Voltaire than to all the Fathers of the Church put

<sup>1</sup> It has been counted that he used no fewer than a hundred and thirty different pseudonyms; and the perpetual prosecution and confiscation of his books explains the procedure. As we have seen, the *Lettres philosophiques* (otherwise the *Lettres anglaises*) were burned on their appearance, in 1734, and the bookseller put in the Bastille; the *Recueil des pièces fugitives* was suppressed in 1739; the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* was officially and clerically condemned in 1751; the poem on *Natural Law* was burned at Paris in 1758; *Candide* at Geneva in 1759; the *Dictionnaire philosophique* at Geneva in 1764, and at Paris in 1765; and many of his minor pseudonymous performances had the same advertisement. But even the *Henriade*, the *Charles XII*, and the first chapters of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* were prohibited; and in 1785 the thirty volumes published of the 1784 edition of his works were condemned *en masse*.

<sup>2</sup> Diderot, critique of *Le philosophe ignorant* in Grimm's *Corr. Litt.* 1 juin 1766; Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, Stück 10-12, 15; Gibbon, ch. i, note near end; ch. ii, note on siege of Damascus. Rousseau was as hostile as any (see Morley's *Rousseau*, ch. ix, § 1). But Rousseau's verdict is the least important, and the least judicial. He had himself earned the detestation of Voltaire, as of many other men. In a moment of pique, Diderot wrote of Voltaire: "Cet homme n'est que le second dans tous les genres" (*Lettre 71 à Mlle. Voland*, 12 août, 1762). He forgot wit and humour!



together."<sup>1</sup> If in a literary way he hated his personal foes, much more did he hate cruelty and bigotry; and it was his work more than any that made impossible a repetition in Europe of such clerical crimes as the hanging of the Protestant pastor, La Rochette; the execution of the Protestant, Calas, on an unproved and absurdly false charge; the torture of his widow and children; the beheading of the lad La Barre for ill-proved blasphemy.<sup>2</sup> As against his many humanities, there is not to be charged on him one act of public malevolence. In his relations with his fickle admirer, FREDERICK THE GREAT, and with others of his fellow-thinkers, he and they painfully brought home to freethinkers the lesson that for them as for all men there is a personal art of life that has to be learned, over and above the rectification of opinion. But he and the others wrought immensely towards that liberation alike from unreason and from bondage which must precede any great improvement of human things.

Voltaire's constant burden was that religion was not only untrue but pernicious, and when he was not dramatically showing this of Christianity, as in his poem *La Ligue* (1723), he was saying it by implication in such plays as *Zaïre* (1732) and *Mahomet* (1742), dealing with the fanaticism of Islam; while in the *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756), really a broad survey of general history, and in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, he applied the method of Montesquieu, with pungent criticism thrown in. Later, he added to his output direct criticisms of the Christian books, as in the *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* (1767), and the *Recherches historiques sur le Christianisme* (? 1769), continuing all his former lines of activity. Meanwhile, with the aid of his companion the MARQUISE DU CHATELET, an accomplished mathematician, he had done much to popularize the physics of Newton and discredit the scientific fallacies of the system of Descartes; all the while preaching a Newtonian but rather agnostic deism. This is the purport of his *Philosophe Ignorant*, his longest philosophical essay.<sup>3</sup> The destruction of Lisbon by the earthquake

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Jowett, of Balliol College. See L. A. Tollemache, *Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol*, 4th ed. pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> See details in Lord Morley's *Voltaire*, 4th ed. pp. 165-70, 257-58. The erection by the French freethinkers of a monument to La Barre in 1905, opposite the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Montmartre, Paris, is an expression at once of the old feud with the Church and the French appreciation of high personal courage. La Barre was in truth something of a scapegrace, but his execution was an infamy, and he went to his death as to a bridal. The erection of the monument has been the occasion of a futile pretence on the clerical side that for La Barre's death the Church had no responsibility, the movers in the case being laymen. Nothing, apparently, can teach Catholic Churchmen that the Church's past sins ought to be confessed like those of individuals. It is quite true that it was a Parlement that condemned La Barre. But what a religious training was it that turned laymen into murderous fanatics!

<sup>3</sup> M. Lanson seems to overlook it when he writes (p. 747) that "the affirmation of God, the denial of Providence and miracles, is the whole metaphysic of Voltaire."

of 1755 seems to have shaken him in his deistic faith, since the upshot of his poem on that subject is to leave the moral government of the universe an absolute enigma; and in the later *Candide* (1759) he attacks theistic optimism with his matchless ridicule. Indeed, as early as 1749, in his *Traité de la Métaphysique*, written for the Marquise du Chatelet, he reaches virtually pantheistic positions in defence of the God-idea, declaring with Spinoza that deity can be neither good nor bad. But, like so many professed pantheists, he relapsed, and he never accepted the atheistic view; on the contrary, we find him arguing absurdly enough, in his *Homily on Atheism* (1765), that atheism had been the destruction of morality in Rome;<sup>1</sup> on the publication of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* in 1770 he threw off an article *Dieu: réponse au Système de la Nature*, where he argued on the old deistic lines; and his tale of *Jenni; or, the Sage and the Atheist* (1775), is a polemic on the same theme. By this time the inconsistent deism of his youth had itself been discredited among the more thoroughgoing freethinkers; and for years it had been said in one section of literary society that Voltaire after all "is a bigot; he is a deist!"<sup>2</sup>

But for freethinkers of all schools the supreme service of Voltaire lay in his twofold triumph over the spirit of religious persecution. He had contrived at once to make it hateful and to make it ridiculous; and it is a great theistic poet of our own day that has pronounced his blade the

sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed  
To death Imposture through the armour joints.<sup>3</sup>

To be perfect, the tribute should have noted that he hated cruelty much more than imposture; and such is the note of the whole movement of which his name was the oriflamme. Voltaire personally was at once the most pugnacious and the most forgiving of men. Few of the Christians who hated him had so often as he fulfilled their own precept of returning good for evil to enemies; and none excelled him in hearty philanthropy. It is notable that most of the humanitarian ideas of the latter half of the century—the demand for the reform of criminal treatment, the denunciation of war and slavery, the insistence on good government, and toleration of all creeds—are

<sup>1</sup> Lord Morley writes (p. 209): "We do not know how far he ever seriously approached the question.....whether a society can exist without a religion." This overlooks both the *Homélie sur l'Athéisme* and the article *ATHÉISME* in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, where the question is discussed seriously and explicitly.

<sup>2</sup> Horace Walpole, Letter to Gray, Nov. 19, 1765. Compare the mordant criticism of Grimm (*Corr. litt.* vii, 54 sq.) on his tract *Dieu* in reply to d'Holbach. "Il raisonne là-dessus comme un enfant," writes Grimm, "mais comme un joli enfant qu'il est."

<sup>3</sup> Browning, *The Two Poets of Croisic*, st. cvii.



more definitely associated with the freethinking than with any religious party, excepting perhaps the laudable but uninfluential sect of Quakers.

The character of Voltaire is still the subject of chronic debate; but the old deadlock of laudation and abuse is being solved in a critical recognition of him as a man of genius flawed by the instability which genius so commonly involves. Carlyle (that model of serenity), while dwelling on his perpetual perturbations, half-humanely suggests that we should think of him as one constantly hag-ridden by maladies of many kinds; and this recognition is really even more important in Voltaire's case than in Carlyle's own. He was "a bundle of nerves," and the clear light of his sympathetic intelligence was often blown aside by gusts of passion—often enough excusably. But while his temperamental weaknesses exposed him at times to humiliation, and often to sarcasm; and while his compelled resort to constant stratagem made him more prone to trickery than his admirers can well care to think him, the balance of his character is abundantly on the side of generosity and humanity.

One of the most unjustifiable of recent attacks upon him (one regrets to have to say it) came from the pen of the late Prof. Churton Collins. In his book on *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (1908) that critic gives in the main an unbiassed account of Voltaire's English experience; but at one point (p. 39) he plunges into a violent impeachment with the slightest possible justification. He in effect adopts the old allegation of Ruffhead, the biographer of Pope—a statement repeated by Johnson—that Voltaire used his acquaintance with Pope and Bolingbroke to play the spy on them, conveying information to Walpole, for which he was rewarded. The whole story collapses upon critical examination. Ruffhead's story is, in brief, that Pope purposely lied to Voltaire as to the authorship of certain published letters attacking Walpole. They were by Bolingbroke; but Pope, questioned by Voltaire, said they were his own, begging him to keep the fact absolutely secret. Next day at court everyone was speaking of the letters as Pope's; and Pope accordingly knew that Voltaire was a traitor. For this tale there is absolutely nothing but hearsay evidence. Ruffhead, as Johnson declared, knew nothing of Pope, and simply used Warburton's material. The one quasi-confirmation cited by Mr. Collins is Bolingbroke's letter to Swift (May 18, 1727) asking him to "insinuate" that Walpole's only ground for ascribing the letters to Bolingbroke "is the authority of one of his spies.....who reports, *not what he hears.....but what he guesses.*" This is an absolute contradiction of the Pope story, at two points. It refers to a *guess* at Bolingbroke, and tells of no citation from Pope. To put it as confirming the charge is to exhibit a complete failure of judgment.

After this irrational argument, Mr. Collins offers a worse. He admits (p. 43) that Voltaire always remained on friendly terms with both Pope and Bolingbroke; but adds that this "can scarcely be alleged as a proof of his innocence, for neither Pope nor Bolingbroke would, for such an offence, have been likely to quarrel with a man in a position so peculiar as that of Voltaire. *His flattery was pleasant.....*" Such an argument is worse than nugatory. That Bolingbroke spoke ill in private of Voltaire on general grounds counts for nothing. He did the same of Pope and of nearly all his friends. Mr. Collins further accuses Voltaire of baseness, falsehood, and hypocrisy on the mere score of his habit of extravagant flattery. This was notoriously the French mode in that age; but it had been just as much the mode in seventeenth-century England, from the Jacobean translators of the Bible to Dryden—to name no others. And Mr. Collins in effect charges systematic hypocrisy upon both Pope and Bolingbroke.

Other stories of Ruffhead's against Voltaire are equally improbable and ill-vouched—as Mr. Collins incidentally admits, though he forgets the admission. They all come from Warburton, himself convicted of double-dealing with Pope; and they finally stand for the hatred of Frenchmen which was so common in eighteenth-century England, and is apparently not yet quite extinct. Those who would have a sane, searching, and competent estimate of Voltaire, leaning humanely to the side of goodwill, should turn to the *Voltaire* of M. Champion. A brief estimate was attempted by the present writer in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1912.

11. It is difficult to realize how far the mere demand for tolerance which sounds from Voltaire's plays and poems before he has begun to assail credences was a signal and an inspiration to new thinkers. Certain it is that the principle of toleration, passed on by Holland to England, was regarded by the orthodox priesthood in France as the abomination of desolation, and resisted by them with all their power. But the contagion was unquenchable. It was presumably in Holland that there were printed in 1738 the two volumes of *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distinguée de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire*, by Marie Huber, a Genevese lady living in Lyons; also the two following parts (1739), replying to criticisms on the earlier. In its gentle way, the book stands very distinctly for the "natural" and ethical principle in religion, denying that the deity demands from men either service or worship, or that he can be wronged by their deeds, or that he can punish them eternally for their sins. This was one of the first French fruits,



after Voltaire, of the English deistic influence;<sup>1</sup> and it is difficult to understand how the authoress escaped molestation. Perhaps the memory of the persecution inflicted on the mystic Madame Guyon withheld the hand of power. As it was, four Protestant theologians opened fire on her, regarding her doctrine as hostile to Christianity. One pastor wrote from Geneva, one from Amsterdam, and two professors from Zurich—the two last in Latin.<sup>2</sup>

From about 1746 onwards, the rationalist movement in eighteenth-century France rapidly widens and deepens. The number of rationalistic writers, despite the press laws which in that age inflicted the indignity of imprisonment on half the men of letters, increased from decade to decade, and the rising prestige of the *philosophes* in connection with the *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) gave new courage to writers and printers. At once the ecclesiastical powers saw in the *Encyclopédie* a dangerous enemy; and in January, 1752, the Sorbonne condemned a thesis "To the celestial Jerusalem," by the Abbé de Prades. It had at first (1751) been received with official applause, but was found on study to breathe the spirit of the new work,<sup>3</sup> to which the Abbé had contributed, and whose editor, Diderot, was his friend. Sooth to say, it contained not a little matter calculated to act as a solvent of faith. Under the form of a vindication of orthodox Catholicism, it negated alike Descartes and Leibnitz; and declared that the science of Newton and the Dutch physiologists was a better defence of religion than the theses of Clarke, Descartes, Cudworth, and Malebranche, which made for materialism. The handling, too, of the question of natural *versus* revealed religion, in which "theism" is declared to be superior to all religions *si unam excipias veram*, "if you except the one true," might well arouse distrust in a vigilant Catholic reader.<sup>4</sup> The whole argument savours far more of the scientific comparative method than was natural in the work of an eighteenth-century seminarist; and the principle, "Either we are ocular witnesses of the facts or we know them only by hearsay,"<sup>5</sup> was plainly as dangerous to the Christian creed as to any other. According to Naigeon,<sup>6</sup> the treatise was wholly the work of de Prades

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Stäudlin, *Gesch. des Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, pp. 287–90; Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2te Aufl. 1848, i, 218–20.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmerman, *De causis magis magisque invalescentis incredulitatis, et medela huic malo adhibenda*, Tiguri, 1739, 4to. Prof. Breitinger of Zurich wrote a criticism afterwards (1741) as *Examen des Lettres sur la religion essentielle*. De Roches, pastor at Geneva, published in letter-form 2 vols. entitled *Défense du Christianisme*, as "préservatif contre" the *Lettres* of Mlle. Huber (1740); and Bouillier of Amsterdam also 2 vols. of *Lettres* (1741).

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.* ii, 624–25; D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 63.

<sup>4</sup> See the thesis (*Jerusalem Cœlesti*) as printed in the *Apologie* de M. l'Abbé De Prades, "Amsterdam," 1752, pp. 4, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Diderot*, 1821, p. 160.

and another Abbé, Yvon;<sup>1</sup> but it remains probable that Diderot inspired not a little of the reasoning; and the clericals, bent on putting down the *Encyclopédie*, professed to have discovered that he was the real author of the thesis. Either this belief or a desire to strike at the *Encyclopédie* through one of its collaborators<sup>2</sup> was the motive of the absurdly belated censure. Such a fiasco evoked much derision from the philosophic party, particularly from Voltaire; and the Sorbonne compassed a new revenge. Soon after came the formal condemnation of the first two volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, of which the second had just appeared.<sup>3</sup>

D'Argenson, watching in his vigilant retirement the course of things on all hands, sees in the episode a new and dangerous development, "the establishment of a veritable inquisition in France, of which the Jesuits joyfully take charge," though he repeatedly remarks also on the eagerness of the Jansenists to outgo the Jesuits.<sup>4</sup> But soon the publication of the *Encyclopédie* is resumed; and in 1753 D'Argenson contentedly notes the official bestowal of "tacit permissions to print secretly" books which could not obtain formal authorization. The permission had been given first by the President Malesherbes; but even when that official lost the king's confidence the practice was continued by the lieutenant of police.<sup>5</sup> Despite the staggering blow of the suppression of the *Encyclopédie*, the *philosophes* speedily triumphed. So great was the discontent even at court that soon (1752) Madame de Pompadour and some of the ministry invited D'Alembert and Diderot to resume their work, "observing a necessary reserve in all things touching religion and authority." Madame de Pompadour was in fact, as D'Alembert said at her death, "in her heart one of ours," as was D'Argenson. But D'Alembert, in a long private conference with D'Argenson, insisted that they must write in freedom like the English and the Prussians, or not at all. Already there was talk of suppressing the philosophic works of Condillac, which a few years before had gone uncondemned; and freedom must be preserved at any cost. "I acquiesce," writes the ex-Minister, "in these arguments."<sup>6</sup>

Curiously enough, the freethinking Fontenelle, who for a time (the dates are elusive) held the office of royal censor, was more rigorous

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 4 fév. 1762; 22 avril, 1768. In the latter entry, Yvon is described as "poursuivi comme infidèle, quoique le plus croyant de France." In 1768, after the *Bélisaire* scandal, he was refused permission to proceed with the publication of his *Histoire ecclésiastique*.

<sup>2</sup> This was de Prades's own view of the matter (*Apologie*, as cited, p. v); and D'Argenson repeatedly says as much. *Mémoires*, iv, 57, 65, 66, 74, 77.

<sup>3</sup> Rocquain, *L'esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878, pp. 149–51; Morley, *Diderot*, ch. v; D'Argenson, iv, 78. The decree of suppression was dated 13 fév. 1752.

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoires*, iv, 64, 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* iv, 129, 140.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* iv, 92–93.



than other officials who had not his reputation for heterodoxy. One day he refused to pass a certain manuscript, and the author put the challenge: "You, sir, who have published the *Histoire des Oracles*, refuse me this?" "If I had been the censor of the *Oracles*," replied Fontenelle, "I should not have passed it."<sup>1</sup> And he had cause for his caution. The unlucky Tercier, who, engrossed in "foreign affairs," had authorized the publication of the *De l'Esprit* of Helvétius, was compelled to resign the censorship, and severely rebuked by the Paris Parlement.<sup>2</sup> But the culture-history of the period, like the political, was one of ups and downs. From time to time the philosophic party had friends at court, as in the persons of the Marquis D'Argenson, Malesherbes, and the Duc de Choiseul, of whom the last-named engineered the suppression of the Jesuits.<sup>3</sup> Then there were checks to the forward movement in the press, as when, in 1770, Choiseul was forced to retire on the advent of Madame Du Barry. The output of freethinking books is after that year visibly curtailed. But nothing could arrest the forward movement of opinion.

12. A new era of propaganda and struggle had visibly begun. In the earlier part of the century freethought had been disseminated largely by way of manuscripts<sup>4</sup> and reprints of foreign books in translation; but from the middle onwards, despite denunciations and prohibitions, new books multiply. To the policy of tacit toleration imposed by Malesherbes a violent end was temporarily put in 1757, when the Jesuits obtained a proclamation of the death penalty against all writers who should attack the Christian religion, directly or indirectly. It was doubtless under the menace of this decree that Deslandes, before dying in 1757, caused to be drawn up by two notaries an *acte* by which he disavowed and denounced not only his *Grands hommes morts en plaisantant* but all his other works, whether printed or in MS., in which he had "laid down principles or sustained sentiments contrary to the spirit of religion."<sup>5</sup> But in 1764, on the suppression of the Jesuits, there was a vigorous resumption of propaganda. "There are books," writes Voltaire in 1765, "of which forty years ago one would not have trusted the manuscript to one's friends, and of which there are now published six editions in eighteen months."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maury, *Hist. de l'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions*, 1864, pp. 312-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal historique de Barbier*, 1847-56, iv, 304.

<sup>3</sup> Astruc, we learn from D'Alembert, connected their decline with the influence of the new opinions. "Ce ne sont pas les jansenistes qui tuent les jésuites, c'est l'Encyclopédie." "Le marouffe Astruc," adds D'Alembert, "est comme Pasquin, il parle quelquefois d'assez bon sens." Lettre à Voltaire, 4 mai, 1762.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. pref. (*La Vie de Salvien*) to French tr. of Salvian, 1734, p. lxi. I have seen MS. translations of Toland and Woolston.

<sup>5</sup> MS. statement, in eighteenth-century hand, on flyleaf of a copy of 1755 ed. of the *Grands hommes*, in the writer's possession. <sup>6</sup> Lettre à D'Alembert, 16 Octobre, 1765.

Voltaire single-handed produced a library; and d'Holbach is credited with at least a dozen freethinking treatises, every one remarkable in its day. But there were many more combatants. The reputation of Voltaire has overshadowed even that of his leading contemporaries, and theirs and his have further obscured that of the lesser men; but a list of miscellaneous freethinking works by French writers during the century, up to the Revolution, will serve to show how general was the activity after 1750. It will be seen that very little was published in France in the period in which English deism was most fecund. A noticeable activity of publication begins about 1745. But it was when the long period of chronic warfare ended for France with the peace of Paris (1763); when she had lost India and North America; when she had suppressed the Jesuit order (1764); and when England had in the main turned from intellectual interests to the pursuit of empire and the development of manufacturing industry, that the released French intelligence<sup>1</sup> turned with irresistible energy to the rational criticism of established opinions. The following table is thus symbolic of the whole century's development:—

1700. *Lettre d'Hypocrate à Damagète*, attributed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers. (Cologne.) Rep. in *Bibliothèque Volante*, Amsterdam, 1700.  
 " [Claude Gilbert.] *Histoire de Calejava, ou de l'isle des hommes raisonnables, avec le parallèle de leur morale et du Christianisme*. Dijon.  
 Suppressed by the author: only one copy known to have escaped.  
 1704. [Gueudeville.] *Dialogues de M. le Baron de la Houtan et d'un sauvage dans l'Amérique*. (Amsterdam.)  
 1709. *Lettre sur l'enthousiasme* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Samson). La Haye.  
 1710. [Tyssot de Patot, Symon.] *Voyages et Aventures de Jaques Massé*. (Bordeaux.)  
 " *Essai sur l'usage de la raillerie* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Van Effen). La Haye.  
 1712. [Deslandes, A. F. B.] *Reflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*.<sup>2</sup> (Amsterdam.)  
 1714. *Discours sur la liberté de penser* [French tr. of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*], traduit de l'anglois et augmenté d'une Lettre d'un Médecin Arabe. (Tr. by Henri Scheurléer and Jean Rousset.) [Rep. 1717.]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of the works noted below, the majority appear or profess to have been printed at Amsterdam, though many bore the imprint *Londres*. All the freethinking books and translations ascribed to d'Holbach bore it. The *Arétin* of Abbé Dulaurens bore the imprint: "Rome, aux dépens de la Congrégation de l'Index." Mystifications concerning authorship have been as far as possible cleared up in the present edition.

<sup>2</sup> Given by Brunet, who is followed by Wheeler, as appearing in 1732, and as translated into English, under the title *Dying Merrily*, in 1745. But I possess an English translation of 1713 (pref. dated March 25), entitled *A Philological Essay: or, Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*. . . . By Monsieur D—, of the Royal Academy of Sciences in France, and author of the *Poetae Rusticantis Literatum Otium*. Translated from the French by Mr. B—, with additions by the author, now in London, and the translator. [A note in a contemporary hand makes "B" Boyer.] Barbier gives 1712 for the first edition, 1732 for the second. Rep. 1755 and 1776.

<sup>3</sup> There is no sign of any such excitement in France over the translation as was aroused in England by the original; but an *Examen du traité de la liberté de penser*, by De Crousaz, was published at Amsterdam in 1718.



1719. [Vroes.] *La Vie et l'Esprit de M. Benoit de Spinoza*.  
 1720. Same work rep. under the double title: *De tribus impostoribus: Des trois imposteurs*. Frankfort on Main.  
 1724. [Lévesque de Burigny.] *Histoire de la philosophie payenne*. La Haye, 2 tom.  
 1730. [Bernard, J.-F.] *Dialogues critiques et philosophiques*. "Par l'Abbé de Charte-Livry." (Amsterdam.) Rep. 1735.  
 1731. *Réfutation des erreurs de Benoit de Spinoza*, par Fénelon, le P. Laury, benédicte, et Boulainvilliers, avec la vie de Spinoza.....par Colerus, etc. (collected and published by Lenglet du Fresnoy). Bruxelles (really Amsterdam). The treatise of Boulainvilliers is really a popular exposition.  
 1732. Re-issue of Deslandes's *Réflexions*.  
 1734. [Voltaire.] *Lettres philosophiques*. 4 edd. within the year. [Condemned to be burned. Publisher imprisoned.]  
 „ [Longue, Louis-Pierre de.] *Les Princesses Malabares, ou le Célibat Philosophique*. [Deistic allegory. Condemned to be burned.]  
 1737. Marquis D'Argens. *La Philosophie du Bon Sens*. (Berlin: 8th edition, Dresden, 1754.)  
 1738. —, *Lettres Juives*. 6 tom. (Berlin.)  
 „ [Marie Huber.] *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distinguée de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire*. 2 tom. (Nominally London.) Rep. 1739 and 1756.  
 1739. —, *Suite to the foregoing, "servant de réponse aux objections," etc.* Also *Suite de la troisième partie*.  
 1741. [Deslandes.] *Pigmalion, ou la Statue animée*. [Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Dijon, 1742.]  
 „ —, *De la Certitude des connaissances humaines.....traduit de l'anglais par F. A. D. L. V.*  
 1743. *Nouvelles libertés de penser*. Amsterdam. [Edited by Dumarsais. Contains the first print of Fontenelle's *Traité de la Liberté*, Dumarsais's short essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison*, Mirabaud's *Sentimens des philosophes sur la nature de l'âme*, etc.]  
 1745. [Lieut. De la Serre.] *La vraie religion traduite de l'Ecriture Sainte, par permission de Jean, Luc, Marc, et Matthieu*. (Nominally Trévoux, "aux dépens des Pères de la Société de Jésus.") [Appeared later as *Examen*, etc. Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Paris.]

[This book was republished in the same year with "démontrée par" substituted in the title for "traduite de," and purporting to be "traduit de l'Anglais de Gilbert Burnet," with the imprint "Londres, G. Cock, 1745." It appeared again in 1761 as *Examen de la religion dont on cherche l'éclaircissement de bonne foi. Attribué à M. de Saint-Evremond, traduit, etc.*, with the same imprint. It again bore the latter title when reprinted in 1763, and again in the *Évangile de la Raison* in 1764. Voltaire in 1763 declared it to be the work of Dumarsais, pronouncing it to be assuredly not in the style of Saint-Evremond (Grimm, iv, 85-88; Voltaire, *Lettre à Damilaville*, 6 déc. 1763), adding "mais il est fort tronqué et détestablement imprimé." This is true of the reprints in the *Évangile de la Raison* (1764, etc.), of one of which the present writer possesses a copy to which there has been appended in MS. a long section which had been lacking. The *Évangile* as a whole purports to be "Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M.....y."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was probably meant to point to the Abbé de Marsy, who died in 1763.

- But its first volume includes four pieces of Voltaire's, and his abridged *Testament de Jean Meslier*. Further, De la Serre is recorded to have claimed the authorship in writing on the eve of his death. Barbier, *Dict. des Anonymes*, 2e éd, No. 6158. He is said to have been hanged as a spy at Maestricht, April 11, 1748.]  
 1745. [La Mettrie.] *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*. [Condemned to be burnt, 1746.] Rep. as *Traité de l'Âme*.  
 1746. [Diderot.] *Pensées philosophiques*. [Condemned to be burnt.]  
 1748. [P. Estève.] *L'Origine de l'Univers expliquée par un principe de matière*. (Berlin.)  
 „ [Benoît de Maillet.] *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionnaire français*. (Printed privately, 1735; rep. 1755.)  
 „ [La Mettrie.] *L'Homme Machine*.  
 1750. *Nouvelles libertés de penser*. Rep.  
 1751. [Mirabaud, J. B. de.] *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité*. [Edited by the Abbé Le Maserier (who contributed the preface and the third part) and Dumarsais.]  
 „ De Prades. *Sorbonne Thesis*.  
 1752. [Gouvest, J. H. Maubert de.] *Lettres Iroquoises*. "Irocopolis, chez les Vénérables." 2 tom. (Rep. 1769 as *Lettres cherakésiennes*.)  
 „ [Génard, F.] *L'École de l'homme, ou Parallèle des Portraits du siècle et des tableaux de l'écriture sainte*.<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam, 3 tom. [Author imprisoned.]  
 1753. [Baume-Desdossat, Canon of Avignon.] *La Christiade*. [Book suppressed. Author fined.]<sup>2</sup>  
 „ Maupertuis. *Système de la nature*.  
 „ Astruc, Jean. *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paraît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*. Bruxelles.  
 1754. Prémontval, A. I. le Guay de. *Le Diogène de d'Alembert, ou Pensées libres sur l'homme*. Berlin. (2nd ed. enlarged, 1755.)  
 „ Burigny, J. L. *Théologie payenne*. 2 tom. (New ed. of his *Histoire de la philosophie*, 1724.)  
 „ [Diderot.] *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*.  
 „ Beausobre, L. de (the younger). *Pyrrhonisme du Sage*. Berlin. (Burned by Paris Parlement.)  
 1755. *Recherches philosophiques sur la liberté de l'homme*. Trans. of Collins's Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty.  
 „ [Voltaire.] *Poème Sur la loi naturelle*.  
 „ *Analyse raisonnée de Bayle*. 4 tom. [By the Abbé de Marsy. Suppressed.<sup>3</sup> Continued in 1773, in 4 new vols., by Robinet.]  
 „ Morelly. *Code de la Nature*.  
 „ [Deleyre.] *Analyse de la philosophie de Bacon*. (Largely an exposition of Deleyre's own views.)  
 1757. Prémontval. *Vues Philosophiques*. (Amsterdam.)  
 [In this year—apparently after one of vigilant repression—was pronounced the death penalty against all writers attacking religion. Hence a general suspen-

<sup>1</sup> The Abbé Sepher ascribed this book to one Dupuis, a Royal Guardsman.

<sup>2</sup> This "prose poem" was not an intentional burlesque, as the ecclesiastical authorities alleged; but it did not stand for orthodoxy. See Grimm's *Correspondance*, i, 113.

<sup>3</sup> "A eu les honneurs de la brûlure, et toutes les censures cumulées des Facultés de Théologie, de la Sorbonne et des évêques." Bachaumont, déc. 23, 1763. Marsy, who was expelled from the Order of Jesuits, was of bad character, and was hotly denounced by Voltaire.



sion of publication. In 1764 the Jesuits were suppressed, and the policy of censorship was soon paralysed.]

1758. Helvétius. *De l'Esprit*. (Authorized. Then condemned.)
1759. [Voltaire.] *Candide*. ("Genève.")
- „ Translation of Hume's *Natural History of Religion* and Philosophical Essays. (By Mérian.) Amsterdam.
1761. [N.-A. Boulanger.<sup>1</sup>] *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental, et des superstitions*. "Ouvrage posthume de Mr. D. J. D. P. E. C."
- „ Rep. of De la Serre's *La vraie religion as Examen de la religion*, etc.
- „ [D'Holbach.] *Le Christianisme dévoilé*. [Imprint: "Londres, 1756." Really printed at Nancy in 1761. Wrongly attributed to Boulanger and to Damilaville.] Rep. 1767 and 1777.
- [Grimm (*Corr. inédite*, 1829, p. 194) speaks in 1763 of this book in his notice of Boulanger, remarking that the title was apparently meant to suggest the author of *L'Antiquité dévoilée*, but that it was obviously by another hand. The *Antiquité*, in fact, was the concluding section of Boulanger's posthumous *Despotisme Oriental* (1761), and was not published till 1766. Grimm professed ignorance as to the authorship, but must have known it, as did Voltaire, who by way of mystification ascribed the book to Damilaville. See Barbier.]
1762. Rousseau. *Émile*. [Publicly burned at Paris and at Geneva. Condemned by the Sorbonne.]
- „ Robinet, J. B. *De la nature*. Vol. i. (Vol. ii in 1764; iii and iv in 1766.)
1763. [Voltaire.] *Saül*. Genève.
- „ — *Dialogue entre un Caloyer et un honnête homme*.
- „ Rep. of De la Serres' *Examen*.
1764. *Discours sur la liberté de penser*. (Rep. of trans. of Collins.)
- „ [Voltaire.] *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif*.<sup>2</sup> [First form of the *Dictionnaire philosophique*. Burned in 1765.]
- „ *Lettres secrètes de M. de Voltaire*. [Holland. Collection of tracts made by Robinet, against Voltaire's will.]
- „ [Voltaire.] *Mélanges*, 3 tom. Genève.
- „ [Dulaurens, Abbé H. J.] *L'Arétin*.
- „ *L'Évangile de la Raison*. Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M.—y. [Ed. by Abbé Dulaurens; containing the *Testament de Jean Meslier* (greatly abridged and adapted by Voltaire); Voltaire's *Catéchisme de l'honnête homme*, *Sermon des cinquante*, etc.; the *Examen de la religion*, attribué à M. de St. Evremond; Rousseau's *Vicaire Savoyard*, from *Émile*; Dumarsais's *Analyse de la religion chrétienne*, etc. Rep. 1765 and 1766.]
1765. *Recueil Nécessaire, avec L'Évangile de la Raison*, 2 tom.
- [Rep. of parts of the *Évangile*. Rep. 1767,<sup>3</sup> 1768, with Voltaire's *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* substituted for that of De la Serre (attribué à M. de St. Evremond), and with a revised set of extracts from Meslier.]
- „ Castillon, J. L. *Essai de philosophie morale*.
1766. Boulanger, N. A. *L'Antiquité dévoilée*.<sup>4</sup> 3 tom. [Recast by d'Holbach. Life of author by Diderot.]

<sup>1</sup> See Grimm, *Corr.* v, 15.

<sup>2</sup> A second edition appeared within the year. "Quoique proscrit presque partout, et même en Hollande, c'est de là qu'il nous arrive." Bachaumont, déc. 27, 1764.

<sup>3</sup> Bachaumont, mai 7, 1767.

<sup>4</sup> "Se repand à Paris avec la permission de la police." Bachaumont, 13 fév. 1766.

1766. *Voyage de Robertson aux terres australes*. Traduit sur le Manuscrit Anglois. Amsterdam.

[Barbier (*Dict. des Ouvr. Anon.*, 2e éd. iii, 437) has a note concerning this *Voyage* which pleasantly illustrates the strategy that went on in the issue of freethinking books. An ex-censor of the period, he tells us, wrote a note on the original edition pointing out that it contains (pp. 145-54) a tirade against "Parlements." This passage was "suppressed to obtain permission to bring the book into France," and a new passage attacking the Encyclopédistes under the name of *Pansophistes* was inserted at another point. The ex-censor had a copy of an edition of 1767, in 12mo, better printed than the first and on better paper. In this, at p. 87, line 30, begins the attack on the Encyclopédistes, which continues to p. 93.

If this is accurate, there has taken place a double mystification. I possess a copy dated 1767, in 12mo, in which no page has so many as 30 lines, and in which there has been no typographical change whatever in pp. 87-93, where there is no mention of Encyclopédistes. But pp. 145-54 are clearly a typographical substitution, in different type, with fewer lines to the page. Here there is a narrative about the *Pansophistes* of the imaginary "Australie"; but while it begins with enigmatic satire it ends by praising them for bringing about a great intellectual and social reform.

If the censure was induced to pass the book as it is in this edition by this insertion, it was either very heedless or very indulgent. There is a sweeping attack on the papacy (pp. 91-99), and another on the Jesuits (pp. 100-102); and it leans a good deal towards republicanism. But on a balance, though clearly anti-clerical, it is rather socio-political than freethinking in its criticism. The words on the title-page, *traduit sur le manuscrit anglois*, are of course pure mystification. It is a romance of the *Utopia* school, and criticizes English conditions as well as French.]

1766. De Prades. *Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Fleury*. (Berlin.) Pref. by Frederick the Great. (Rep. 1767.)
- „ [Burigny.] *Examen critique des Apologues de la religion chrétienne*. Published (by Naigeon?) under the name of Freret.<sup>1</sup> [Twice rep. in 1767. Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]
- „ [Voltaire.] *Le philosophe ignorant*.
- „ [Abbé Millot.] *Histoire philosophique de l'homme*. [Naturalistic theory of human beginnings.]
1767. Castillon. *Almanach Philosophique*.
- „ *Doutes sur la religion* (attributed to Gueroult de Pival), *suivi de l'Analyse du Traité théologique-politique de Spinoza* (by Boulainvilliers). [Rep. with additions in 1792 under the title *Doutes sur les religions révélées, adressés à Voltaire*, par Émilie du Chatelet. Ouvrage posthume.]
- „ [Dulaurens.] *L'antipapisme révélé*.
- „ *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe*. [Published under the name of Freret (d. 1749). Written or edited by Naigeon.<sup>2</sup>]

<sup>1</sup> "Il est facile de se convaincre que les parties les plus importantes et les plus solides de cet ouvrage sont empruntées aux travaux de Burigny." L.-F. Alfred Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, p. 316. Maury leaves it an open question whether the compilation was made by Burigny or by Naigeon. The Abbé Bergier accepted it without hesitation as the work of Freret, who was known to hold some heretical views. (Maury, p. 317.) Barbier confidently ascribes the work to Burigny.

<sup>2</sup> The mystification in regard to this work is elaborate. It purports to be translated from an English version, declared in turn by its translator to be made "from the Greek."



1767. [D'Holbach.] *L'Imposture sacerdotale, ou Recueil de pièces sur la clergé, traduites de l'anglois.*  
 „ [Voltaire.] *Collection des lettres sur les miracles.*  
 „ — *Examen important de milord Bolingbroke.*  
 „ Marmontel. *Bélisaire.* (Censured by the Sorbonne.)  
 „ [Damilaville.] *L'honnêteté théologique.*  
 „ Reprint of *Le Christianisme dévoilé.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1768 and 1770.]  
 „ [Voltaire.] *Questions sur les Miracles.* Par un Proposant.  
 „ *Seconde partie of the Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme.*  
 1768. Meister, J. H. *De l'origine des principes religieux.*  
 [Author banished from his native town, Zurich, "in perpetuity" (decree rescinded in 1772), and book publicly burned there by the hangman.<sup>1</sup> Meister published a modified edition at Zurich in 1769. Orig. rep. in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770.]  
 1768. *Catalogue raisonné des esprits forts, depuis le curé Rabelais jusqu'au curé Meslier.*  
 „ [D'Holbach.] *La Contagion sacrée, ou histoire naturelle de la superstition.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]  
 „ — *Lettres philosophiques sur l'origine des préjugés, etc., traduites de l'anglois* (of Toland).  
 „ — *Lettres à Eugénie, ou preservatif contre les préjugés.* 2 tom.  
 „ — *Théologie Portative.* "Par l'abbé Bernier." [Also burnt, 1776.]  
 „ *Traité des trois Imposteurs.* (See 1719 and 1720.) Rep. 1775, 1777, 1793.  
 „ Naigeon, J. A. *Le militaire philosophe.* [Adaptation of a MS. The last chapter by d'Holbach.]  
 „ D'Argens. *Œuvres complètes*, 24 tom. Berlin.  
 „ *Examen des prophéties qui servent de fondement à la religion chrétienne* (tr. from Collins by d'Holbach).  
 „ Robinet. *Considérations philosophiques.*  
 1769-1780. *L'Évangile du jour.* 18 tom. Series of pieces, chiefly by Voltaire.  
 1769. [Diderot. Also ascribed to Castillon.] *Histoire générale des dogmes et opinions philosophiques.....tirée du Dictionnaire encyclopédique.* Londres, 3 tom.  
 „ [Mirabaud.] *Opinions des anciens sur les juifs, and Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*<sup>2</sup> (rep. in 1777 as *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*).  
 „ [Isoard-Delisle, otherwise Delisle de Sales.] *De la Philosophie de la Nature.* 6 tom. [Author imprisoned. Book condemned to be burnt, 1775.]  
 „ [Seguier de Saint-Brisson.] *Traité des Droits de Génie, dans lequel on examine si la connoissance de la vérité est avantageuse aux hommes et possible au philosophe.* "Carolsrouhe," 1769. [A strictly naturalistic-ethical theory of society. Contains an attack on the doctrine of Rousseau, in *Émile*, on the usefulness of religious error.]

It is now commonly ascribed to Naigeon. (Maury, as cited, p. 317.) Its machinery, and its definite atheism, mark it as of the school of d'Holbach, though it is alleged to have been written by Freret as early as 1722. It is however reprinted, with the *Examen critique des Apologistes*, in the 1796 edition of Freret's works without comment; and Barbier was satisfied that it was the one genuine "philosophic" work ascribed to Freret, but that it was redacted by Naigeon from imperfect MSS.

<sup>1</sup> Notice sur Henri Meister, pref. to *Lettres inédites de Madame de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Deux nouveaux livres infernaux.....connus comme manuscrits depuis longtemps et gardés dans l'obscurité des portefeuilles....." Bachaumont, 22 mars, 1769.

1769. *L'enfer détruit*, traduit de l'Anglois [by d'Holbach.]  
 1770. [D'Holbach.] *Histoire critique de Jésus Christ.*  
 „ — *Examen critique de la vie et des ouvrages de Saint Paul* (tr. from English of Peter Annet).  
 „ — *Essai sur les Préjugés.* (Not by Dumarsais, whose name on the title-page is a mystification.)  
 „ — *Système de la Nature.* 2 tom.  
 „ *Recueil Philosophique.* 2 tom. [Edited by Naigeon. Contains a rep. of Dumarsais's essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison*, an extract from Tindal, essays by Vauvenargues and Freret (or Fontenelle), three by Mirabaud, Diderot's *Pensées sur la religion*, several essays by d'Holbach, Meister's *De l'origine des principes religieux*, etc.]  
 „ *Analyse de Bayle.* Rep. of the four vols. of De Marsy, with four more by Robinet.  
 „ *L'Esprit du Judaïsme.* (Trans. from Collins by d'Holbach.)  
 „ Raynal (with Diderot and others). *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes.* (Containing atheistic arguments by Diderot. Suppressed, 1772.)  
 [In this year there were condemned to be burned seven freethinking works: d'Holbach's *Contagion Sacrée*; Voltaire's *Dieu et les Hommes*; the French translation (undated) of Woolston's *Discourses on the Miracles of Jesus Christ*; Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen critique de la religion chrétienne*; an *Examen impartial des principales religions du monde*, undated; d'Holbach's *Christianisme dévoilé*; and his *Système de la Nature*.]  
 1772. *Le Bon Sens.* [Adaptation from Meslier by Diderot and d'Holbach. Condemned to be burnt, 1774.]  
 „ *De la nature humaine.* [Trans. of Hobbes by d'Holbach.]  
 1773. Helvétius. *De l'Homme.* Ouvrage posthume. 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt, Jan. 10, 1774. Rep. 1775.]  
 „ Carra, J. L. *Système de la Raison, ou le prophète philosophe.*  
 „ [Burigny (?).] *Recherches sur les miracles.*  
 „ [D'Holbach.] *La politique naturelle.* 2 tom.  
 „ —. *Système Sociale.* 3 tom.  
 1774. Abauzit, F. *Réflexions impartiales sur les Évangiles, suivies d'un essai sur l'Apocalypse.* (Abauzit died 1767.)  
 „ [Condorcet.] *Lettres d'un Théologien.* (Atheistic.)  
 „ New edition of *Theologie Portative.* 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt.]  
 1775. [Voltaire.] *Histoire de Jenni, ou Le Sage et l'Athée.* [Attack on atheism.]  
 1776. [D'Holbach.] *La morale universelle.* 3 tom.  
 „ —. *Ethocratie.*  
 1777. *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*, "par M. Freret." [Not by Freret. A rep. of Mirabaud's *Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*, 1769, which was probably written about 1750, being replied to in the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier, 1752 and 1765.]  
 „ Carra. *Esprit de la morale et de la philosophie.*  
 1778. Barthez, P. J. *Nouveaux éléments de la science de l'homme.*  
 1779. *Vie d'Apollonius de Tyane par Philostrate*, avec les commentaires donnés en anglois par Charles Blount sur les deux premiers livres. [Trans. by J.-F. Salvemini de Castillon, Berlin.] Amsterdam, 4 tom. (In addition to Blount's pref. and notes there is a scoffing dedication to Pope Clement XIV.)



1780. Duvernet, Abbé Th. J. *L'Intolérance religieuse*.  
 „ Cloutz, Anacharsis. *La Certitude des preuves du Mahométisme*. [Reply by way of parody to Bergier's work, noted on p. 250.]  
 „ Second ed. of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique*, with additions. (Condemned to be burnt, 1781.)  
 1781. Maréchal, Sylvain. *Le nouveau Lucrèce*.  
 1783. Brissot de Warville. *Lettres philosophiques sur S. Paul*.  
 1784. Doray de Longrais. *Faustin, ou le siècle philosophique*.  
 „ Pougens, M. C. J. de. *Récréations de philosophie et de morale*.  
 1785. Maréchal. *Livre échappé au Déluge*. [Author dismissed.]  
 1787. Marquis Pastoret. *Zoroastre, Confucius, et Mahomet*.  
 1788. Meister. *De la morale naturelle*.  
 „ Pastoret. *Moïse considéré comme législateur et comme moraliste*.  
 „ Maréchal. *Almanach des honnêtes gens*. [Author imprisoned; book burnt.]  
 1789. Volney. *Les Ruines des Empires*.  
 „ Duvernet, Abbé. *Les Dévotions de Madame de Betzamooth*.  
 „ Cerutti (Jesuit Father). *Bréviaire Philosophique, ou Histoire du Judaïsme, du Christianisme, et du Déisme*.  
 1791-3. Naigeon. *Dictionnaire de la philosophie ancienne et moderne*.  
 1795. Dupuis. *De l'origine de tous les Cultes*. 5 tom.  
 „ *La Fable de Christ dévoilée; ou Lettre du muphti de Constantinople à Jean Ange Braschy, muphti de Rome*.  
 1797. Rep. of d'Holbach's *Contagion sacrée*, with notes by Lemaire.  
 1798. Maréchal. *Pensées libres sur les prêtres*. A Rome, et se trouve à Paris, chez les Marchands de Nouveautés. L'An Ier de la Raison, et VI de la République Française.

13. It will be noted that after 1770—coincidentally, indeed, with a renewed restraint upon the press—there is a notable falling-off in the freethinking output. Rationalism had now permeated educated France; and, for different but analogous reasons, the stress of discussion gradually shifted as it had done in England. France in 1760 stood to the religious problem somewhat as England did in 1730, repeating the deistic evolution with a difference. By that time England was committed to the new paths of imperialism and commercialism; whereas France, thrown back on the life of ideas and on her own politico-economic problems, went on producing the abundant propaganda we have noted, and, alongside of it, an independent propaganda of economics and politics. At the end of 1767, the leading French diarist<sup>1</sup> notes that “there is formed at Paris a new sect, called the Economists,” and names its leading personages, Quesnay, Mirabeau the elder, the Abbé Baudeau, Mercier de la Rivière, and Turgot. These developed the doctrine of agricultural or “real” production which so stimulated and influenced Adam Smith. But immediately afterwards<sup>2</sup> the diarist notes a rival sect, the school

<sup>1</sup> Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, déc. 20, 1767.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* Jan. 18, 1768.

of Forbonnais, who founded mainly on the importance of commerce and manufactures. Each “sect” had its journal. The intellectual ferment had inevitably fructified thought upon economic as upon historical, religious, and scientific problems; and there was in operation a fourfold movement, all tending to make possible the immense disintegration of the State which began in 1789. After the Economists came the “Patriots,” who directed towards the actual political machine the spirit of investigation and reform. And the whole effective movement is not unplausibly to be dated from the fall of the Jesuits in 1764.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably the forces interacted: Montesquieu and Rousseau alike dealt with both the religious and the social issues; d'Holbach in his first polemic, the *Christianisme dévoilé*, opens the stern impeachment of kings and rulers which he develops so powerfully in the *Essai sur les Préjugés*; and the *Encyclopédie* sent its search-rays over all the fields of inquiry. But of the manifold work done by the French intellect in the second and third generations of the eighteenth century, the most copious and the most widely influential body of writings that can be put under one category is that of which we have above made a chronological conspectus.

Of these works the merit is of course very various; but the total effect of the propaganda was formidable, and some of the treatises are extremely effective. The *Examen critique* of Burigny,<sup>2</sup> for instance, which quickly won a wide circulation when printed, is one of the most telling attacks thus far made on the Christian system, raising as it does most of the issues fought over by modern criticism. It tells indeed of a whole generation of private investigation and debate; and the Abbé Bergier, assuming it to be the work of Freret, in whose name it is published, avows that its author “has written it in the same style as his academic dissertations: he has spread over it the same erudition; he seems to have read everything and mastered everything.”<sup>3</sup> Perhaps not the least effective part of the book is the chapter which asks: “Are men more perfect since the coming of Jesus Christ?”; and it is here that the clerical reply is most feeble. The critic cites the claims made by apologists as to the betterment of life by Christianity, and then contrasts with those claims the thousand-and-one lamentations by Christian writers over the utter badness of all the life around them. Bergier in reply follows the tactic habitually employed in the same difficulty to-day: he ignores

<sup>1</sup> So Pidansat de Mairobert in his preface to the first ed. (1777) of the *Mémoires Secrets* of Bachaumont, continued by him. See pref. to the abridged ed. by Bibliophile Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> As to the authorship see above, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> *La Certitude des preuves du Christianisme* (1767), 2e édit. 1768, *Avertissement*.



the fact that his own apologists have been claiming a vast betterment, and contends that religion is not to be blamed for the evils it condemns. Not by such furtive sophistry could the Church turn the attack, which, as Bergier bitterly observes, was being made by Voltaire in a new book every year.

As always, the weaker side of the critical propaganda is its effort at reconstruction. As in England, so in France, the faithful accused the critics of "pulling down without building up," when in point of fact their chief error was to build up—that is, to rewrite the history of human thought—before they had the required materials, or had even mastered those which existed. Thus Voltaire and Rousseau alike framed *a priori* syntheses of the origins of religion and society. But there were closer thinkers than they in the rationalistic ranks. Fontenelle's essay *De l'origine des fables*, though not wholly exempt from error, admittedly lays aright the foundations of mythology and hierology; and De Brosses in his treatise *Du Culte des dieux fétiches* (1760) does a similar service on the side of anthropology. Meister's essay *De l'origine des principes religieux* is full of insight and breadth; and, despite some errors due to the backwardness of anthropology, essentially scientific in temper and standpoint. His later essay, *De la morale naturelle*, shows the same independence and fineness of speculation, seeming indeed to tell of a character which missed fame by reason of over-delicacy of fibre and lack of the driving force which marked the foremost men of that tempestuous time. Vauvenargues's essay *De la suffisance de la religion naturelle* is no less clinching, granted its deism. So, on the side of philosophy, Mirabaud, who was secretary of the Académie from 1742 to 1755, handles the problem of the relation of deism to ethics—if the posthumous essays in the *Recueil philosophique* be indeed his—in a much more philosophic fashion than does Voltaire, arguing unanswerably for the ultimate self-dependence of morals. The *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe*, ascribed to Freret, again, is a notably skilful attack on theism.

14. One of the most remarkable of the company in some respects is NICOLAS-ANTOINE BOULANGER (1722–1759), of whom Diderot gives a vivid account in a sketch prefixed to the posthumous *L'Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766). At the Collège de Beauvais, Boulanger was so little stimulated by his scholastic teachers that they looked for nothing from him in his maturity. When, however, at the age of seventeen, he began to study mathematics and architecture, his faculties began to develop; and the life, first of a military engineer in 1743–44, and later in the service

of the notable department of Roads and Bridges—the most efficient of all State services under Louis XV—made him an independent and energetic thinker. The chronic spectacle of the *corvée*, the forced labour of peasants on the roads, moved him to indignation; but he sought peace in manifold study, the engineer's contact with nature arousing in him all manner of speculations, geological and sociological. Seeking for historic light, he mastered Latin, which he had failed to do at school, reading widely and voraciously; and when the Latins failed to yield him the light he craved he systematically mastered Greek, reading the Greeks as hungrily and with as little satisfaction. Then he turned indefatigably to Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic, gleaning at best verbal clues which at length he wrought into a large, loose, imaginative yet immensely erudite schema of ancient social evolution, in which the physicist's pioneer study of the structure and development of the globe controls the anthropologist's guesswork as to the beginnings of human society. The whole is set forth in the bulky posthumous work *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental* (1761), and in the further treatise *L'antiquité dévoilée* (3 tom. 1766), which is but the concluding section of the first-named.

It all yields nothing to modern science; the unwearying research is all carried on, as it were, in the dark; and the sleepless brain of the pioneer can but weave webs of impermanent speculation from masses of unsifted and unmanageable material. Powers which to-day, on a prepared ground of ascertained science, might yield the greatest results, were wasted in a gigantic effort to build a social science out of the chaos of undeciphered antiquity, natural and human. But the man is nonetheless morally memorable. Diderot pictures him with a head Socratically ugly, simple and innocent of life, gentle though vivacious, reading Rabbinical Hebrew in his walks on the high roads, suffering all his life from "domestic persecution," "little contradictory though infinitely learned," and capable of passing in a moment, on the stimulus of a new idea, into a state of profound and entranced absorption. Diderot is always enthusiastically generous in praise; but in reading and reviewing Boulanger's work we can hardly refuse assent to his friend's claim that "if ever man has shown in his career the true characters of genius, it was he." His immense research was all compassed in a life of thirty-seven years, occupied throughout in an active profession; and the diction in which he sets forth his imaginative construction of the past reveals a constant intensity of thought rarely combined with scholarly knowledge. But it was



an age of concentrated energy, carrying in its womb the Revolution. The perusal of Boulanger is a sufficient safeguard against the long-cherished hallucination that the French freethinking of his age was but a sparkle of raillery.

Even among some rationalists, however, who are content to take hearsay report on these matters, there appears still to subsist a notion that the main body of the French freethinkers of the eighteenth century were mere scoffers, proceeding upon no basis of knowledge and with no concern for research. Such an opinion is possible only to those who have not examined their work. To say nothing more of the effort of Boulanger, an erudition much more exact than Voltaire's and a deeper insight than his and Rousseau's into the causation of primitive religion inspires the writings of men like Burigny and Freret on the one hand, and Fontenelle and Meister on the other. The philosophic reach of Diderot, one of the most convinced opponents of the ruling religion, was recognized by Goethe. And no critic of the "*philosophes*" handled more uncompromisingly than did Dumarsais<sup>1</sup> the vanity of the assumption that a man became a philosopher by merely setting himself in opposition to orthodox belief. Dumarsais, long scholastically famous for his youthful treatise *Des Tropes*, lived up to his standard, whatever some of the more eminent *philosophes* may have done, being found eminently lovable by pietists who knew him; while for D'Alembert he was "the La Fontaine of the philosophers" in virtue of his lucid simplicity of style.<sup>2</sup> The *Analyse de la religion chrétienne* printed under his name in some editions of the *Évangile de la Raison* has been pronounced supposititious. It seems to be the work of at least two hands<sup>3</sup> of different degrees of instruction;

<sup>1</sup> In the short essay *Le Philosophe*, which appeared in the *Nouvelles Libertés de Penser*, 1743 and 1750, and in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770. In the 1793 rep. of the *Essai sur les préjugés* (again rep. in 1822) it is unhesitatingly affirmed, on the strength of its title-page and the prefixed letter of Dumarsais, dated 1750, that that book is an expansion of the essay *Le Philosophe*, and that this was published in 1760. But *Le Philosophe* is an entirely different production, which to a certain extent criticizes *les philosophes* so-called. The *Essai sur les préjugés* published in 1770 is not the work of Dumarsais; it is a new work by d'Holbach. This was apparently known to Frederick, who in his rather angry criticism of the book writes that, whereas Dumarsais had always respected constituted authorities, others had "put out in his name, two years after he was dead and buried, a libel of which the veritable author could only be a schoolboy as new to the world as he was puzzle-headed." (*Mélanges en vers et en prose de Frédéric II*, 1793, ii, 215). Dumarsais died in 1754, but I can find no good evidence that the *Essai sur les préjugés* was ever printed before 1770. As to d'Holbach's authorship see the *Œuvres de Diderot*, ed. 1821, xii, 115 sq.—passage copied in the 1829-31 ed. of the *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, xiv, 293 sq. In a letter to D'Alembert dated Mars 27, 1773, Voltaire writes that in a newly-printed collection of treatises containing his own *Lois de Minos* is included "*le philosophe* de Dumarsais, qui n'a jamais été imprimé jusqu'à présent." This seems to be a complete mistake.

<sup>2</sup> Grimm (iv, 86) has some good stories of him. He announced one day that he had found twenty-five fatal flaws in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, the first being that the dead do not rise. His scholarly friend Nicolas Boindin (see above, p. 222) said: "Dumarsais is a Jansenist atheist; as for me, I am a Molinist atheist."

<sup>3</sup> On two successive pages the title Messiah is declared to mean "simply one sent" and simply "anointed."

but, apart from some errors due to one of these, it does him no discredit, being a vigorous criticism of Scriptural contradictions and anomalies, such as a "Jansenist atheist" might well compose, though it makes the usual profession of deistic belief.

Later polemic works, inspired by those above noticed, reproduce some of their arguments, but with an advance in literary skill, as in the anonymous *Bon Sens* given forth (1772) by Diderot and d'Holbach as the work of Jean Meslier, but really an independent compilation, embodying other arguments with his, and putting the whole with a concision and brilliancy to which he could make no approach. Prémontval, a bad writer,<sup>1</sup> contrives nonetheless to say many pungent things of a deistic order in his *Diogène de d'Alembert*, and, following Marie Huber, puts forward the formula of religion *versus* theology, which has done so much duty in the nineteenth century. Of the whole literature it is not too much to say that it covered cogently most of the important grounds of latter-day debate, from the questions of revelation and the doctrine of torments to the bases of ethics and the problem of deity; and it would be hard to show that the nineteenth century has handled the main issues with more sincerity, lucidity, or logic than were attained by Frenchmen in the eighteenth. To-day, no doubt, in the light of a century and a-half of scientific, historic, and philosophic accumulation, the rationalist case is put with more profundity and accuracy by many writers than it could be in the eighteenth century. But we have to weigh the freethinkers of that age against their opponents, and the French performers against those of other countries, to make a fair estimate. When this is done their credit is safe. When German and other writers say with Tholuck that "unbelief entered Germany not by the weapons of mere wit and scoffing as in France; it grounded itself on learned research,"<sup>2</sup> they merely prove their ignorance of French culture-history. An abundance of learned research in France preceded the triumphant campaign of Voltaire, who did most of the witty writing on the subject; and whose light artillery was to the last reinforced by the heavier guns of d'Holbach. It is only in the analysis of the historical problem by the newer tests of anthropology and hierology, and in the light of latterly discovered documents, that our generation has made much advance on the strenuous pioneers of the age of Voltaire. And even in the

<sup>1</sup> Like Buffier and Huard, however, he strives for a reform in spelling, dropping many doubled letters, and writing *home, bone, acuse, fole, apelle, honête, afreux*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Abriß einer Geschichte der Umwälzung welche seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland statt gefunden*, in Tholuck's *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii, 5. The proposition is repeated pp. 24, 33.



field of anthropology the sound thinking of Fontenelle and De Bosses long preceded any equally valid work by rationalists in Germany; though Spencer of Cambridge had preceded them in his work of constructive orthodoxy.

15. Though the bibliographers claim to have traced the authorship in most cases, such works were in the first instance generally published anonymously,<sup>1</sup> as were those of Voltaire, d'Holbach, and the leading freethinkers; and the clerical policy of suppression had the result of leaving them generally unanswered, save in anonymous writings, when they nevertheless got into private circulation. It was generally impolitic that an official answer should appear to a book which was officially held not to exist; so that the orthodox defence was long confined mainly to the classic performances of Pascal, Bossuet, Huet, Fénelon, and some outsiders such as the Protestant Abbadie, who settled first in Berlin and later in London. The polemic of every one of the writers named is a work of ability; even that of Abbadie (*Traité de la Vérité de la religion chrétienne*, 1684), though now little known, was in its day much esteemed.<sup>2</sup> In the age of Louis XIV those classic answers to unbelief were by believers held to be conclusive; and thus far the French defence was certainly more thorough and philosophical than the English. But French freethought, which in Herbert's day had given the lead to English, now drew new energy from the English growth; and the general arguments of the old apologists did not explicitly meet the new attack. Their books having been written to meet the mostly unpublished objections of previous generations, the Church through its chosen policy had the air of utter inability to confute the newer propaganda, though some apologetic treatises of fair power did appear, in particular those of the Abbé Bergier.<sup>3</sup> By the avowal of a Christian historian, "So low had the talents of the once illustrious Church of France fallen that in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Christianity itself was assailed, not one champion of note appeared in its ranks; and when the convocation of the clergy, in 1770, published their famous anathema against the dangers of unbelief, and offered rewards for the best

<sup>1</sup> The exceptions were books published outside of France.

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Sévigné, for instance, declared that she would not let pass a year of her life without re-reading the second volume of Abbadie.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Déisme réfuté par lui-même* (largely a reply to Rousseau), 1765; 1770, *Apologie de la religion chrétienne*; 1773, *La certitude des preuves du christianisme*. In 1759 had appeared the *Lettres sur le Déisme* of the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne. It deals chiefly with the English deists, and with D'Argens. As before noted, the Abbé Gauchat began in 1751 his *Lettres Critiques*, which in time ran to 15 volumes (1751-61). There were also two journals, Jesuit and Jansenist, which fought the *philosophes* (Lanson, p. 721); and sometimes even a manuscript was answered—e.g. the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier (1752), a reply to Mirabaud's unpublished *Examen critique*.

essays in defence of the Christian faith, the productions called forth were so despicable that they sensibly injured the cause of religion."<sup>1</sup>

The freethinking attack, in fact, had now become overwhelming. After the suppression of the Jesuit Order (1764)<sup>2</sup> the press grew practically more and more free; and when, after the accession of Pope Clement XIV (1769), the freethinking books circulated with less and less restraint, Bergier extended his attack on deism, and deists and clerics joined in answering the atheistic *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach. But by this time the deistic books were legion, and the political battle over the taxation of Church property had become the more pressing problem, especially seeing that the mass of the people remained conforming. The manifesto of the clergy in 1770 was accompanied by an address to the king "On the evil results of liberty of thought and printing," following up a previous appeal by the pope;<sup>3</sup> and in consideration of the donation by the clergy of sixteen million livres the Government recommended the Parlement of Paris to proceed against impious books. There seems accordingly to have been some hindrance to publication for a year or two; but in 1772 appeared the *Bon Sens* of d'Holbach and Diderot; and there was no further serious check, the Jesuits being disbanded by the pope in 1773.

The English view that French orthodoxy made a "bad" defence to the freethinking attack as compared with what was done in England (Sir J. F. Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, 2nd. ser. p. 281; Alison, as cited above) proceeds on some misconception of the circumstances, which, as has been shown, were substantially different in the two countries. Could the English clergy have resorted to official suppression of deistic literature, they too would doubtless have done so. Swift and Berkeley bitterly desired to. But the view that the English defence was relatively "good," and that Butler's in particular was decisive, is also, as we have seen, fallacious. In Sir Leslie Stephen's analysis, as apart from his preamble, the orthodox defence is exhibited as generally weak, and often absurd. Nothing could be more futile than the three "Pastoral Letters" published by the Bishop of London (1728, 1730, 1731) as counterblasts to the freethinking books of this period. In France the defence began sooner, and was more profound and even more methodical. Pascal at least went deeper, and Bossuet (in his *Discours sur*

<sup>1</sup> Alison, *History of Europe*, ed. 1849, i, 180-81.

<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits were expelled from Portugal in 1759; from Bohemia and Denmark in 1766; from the whole dominions of Spain in 1767; from Genoa and Venice in the same year; and from Naples, Malta, and Parma in 1768. Officially suppressed in France in 1764, they were expelled thence in 1767. Pope Clement XIII strove to defend them; but in 1773 the Society was suppressed by papal bull by Clement XIV; whereafter they took refuge in Prussia and Russia, ruled by the freethinking Frederick and Catherine.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829-31, vii, 51 sq.



*l'Histoire Universelle*) more widely, into certain inward and outward problems of the controversy than did any of the English apologists; Huet produced, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, one of the most methodical of all the defensive treatises of the time; Abbadie, as before noted, gave great satisfaction, and certainly grappled zealously with Hobbes and Spinoza; Allix, though no great dialectician, gave a lead to English apologetics against the deists (above, p. 97), and was even adapted by Paley; and Fénelon, though his *Traité de l'Existence et des Attributs de Dieu* (1712) and *Lettres sur la Religion* (1716) are not very powerful processes of reasoning, contributed through his reproduced conversations (1710) with Ramsay a set of arguments at least as plausible as anything on the English side, and, what is more notable, marked by an amenity which almost no English apologist attained.

The ground had been thus very fully covered by the defence in France before the main battle in England began; and when a new French campaign commenced with Voltaire, the defence against that incomparable attack, so far as the system allowed of any, was probably as good as it could have been made in England, save insofar as the Protestants gave up modern miracles, while most of the Catholics claimed them for their Church. Counterblasts such as the essay of Linguet, *Le Fanatisme des Philosophes* (1764), were but general indictments of rationalism; and other apologetic treatises, as we saw, handled only the most prominent books on the other side. It should be noted, too, that as late as 1764 the police made it almost impossible to obtain in Paris works of Voltaire recently printed in Holland (Grimm, vii, 123, 133, 434). But, as Paley admitted with reference to Gibbon ("Who can refute a sneer?"), the new attack was in any case very hard to meet. A sneer is not hard to refute when it is unfounded, inasmuch as it implies a proposition, which can be rebutted or turned by another sneer. The Anglican Church had been well enough pleased by the polemic sneers of Swift and Berkeley; but the other side had the heavier guns, and of the mass of defences produced in England nothing remains save in the neat compilation of Paley. Alison's whole avowal might equally well apply to anything produced in England as against Voltaire. The skeptical line of argument for faith had been already employed by Huet and Pascal and Fénelon, with visibly small success; Berkeley had achieved nothing with it as against English deism; and Butler had no such effect in his day in England as to induce French Catholics to use him. (He does not appear to have been translated into French till 1821.)

An Oratorian priest, again, translated the anti-deistic essays of President Forbes; and the *Pensées Théologiques relatives aux erreurs du temps* of Père Jamin (1768; 4e édit. 1773) were

thought worthy of being translated into German, poor as they were. With their empty affirmation of authority they suggest so much blank cartridge, which could avail nothing with thinking men; and here doubtless the English defence makes a better impression. But, on the other hand, Voltaire circulated widely in England, and was no better answered there than in France. His attack was, in truth, at many points peculiarly baffling, were it only by its inimitable wit. The English replies to Spinoza, again, were as entirely inefficient or deficient as the French; the only intelligent English answers to Hume on Miracles (the replies on other issues were of no account) made use of the French investigations of the Jansenist miracles; and the replies to Gibbon were in general ignominious failures.

Finally, though the deeper reasonings of Diderot were over the heads alike of the French and the English clergy, the *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach was met skilfully enough at many points by G. J. Holland (1772), who, though not a Frenchman, wrote excellent French, and supplied for French readers a very respectable rejoinder;<sup>1</sup> whereas in England there was practically none. In this case, of course, the defence was deistic; as was that of Voltaire, who criticized d'Holbach as Bolingbroke attacked Spinoza and Hobbes. But the *Examen du Matérialisme* of the Abbé Bergier (1771), who was a member of the Academy of Sciences, was at least as good as anything that could then have been done in the Church of England; and the same may be said of his reply to Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen*. It is certainly poor enough; but Bishop Watson used some of its arguments for his reply to Paine. Broadly speaking, as we have said, much more of French than of English intelligence had been turned to the dispute in the third quarter of the century. In England, political and industrial discussion relieved the pressure on creed; in France, before the Revolution, the whole habit of absolutism tended to restrict discussion to questions of creed; and the attack would in any case have had the best of it, because it embodied all the critical forces hitherto available. The controversy thus went much further than the pre-Human issues raised in England; and the English orthodoxy of the end of the century was, in comparison, intellectually as weak as politically and socially it was strong. In France, from the first, the greater intellectual freedom in social intercourse, exemplified in the readiness of women to declare themselves freethinkers (cp. Jamin, as cited, ch. xix, § 1), would have made the task of the apologists harder even had they been more competent.

16. Above the scattered band of minor combatants rises a group

<sup>1</sup> This apologetic work, after having been praised by the censor and registered with *privilege du roi* in November, 1772, was officially suppressed on Jan. 17, 1773, and, it would appear, reissued in that year.



of writers of special power, several of whom, without equalling Voltaire in ubiquity of influence, rivalled him in intellectual power and industry. The names of DIDEROT, D'HOLBACH, D'ALEMBERT, HELVÉTIUS, and CONDORCET are among the first in literary France of the generation before the Revolution; after them come VOLNEY and DUPUIS; and in touch with the whole series stands the line of great mathematicians and physicists (to which also belongs D'Alembert), LAPLACE, LAGRANGE, LALANDE, DELAMBRE. When to these we add the names of MONTESQUIEU, BUFFON, CHAMFORT, RIVAROL, VAUVENARGUES; of the materialists LA METTRIE and CABANIS; of the philosophers CONDILLAC and DESTUTT DE TRACY; of the historian RAYNAL; of the poet ANDRÉ CHÉNIER; of the politicians TURGOT, MIRABEAU, DANTON, DESMOULINS, ROBESPIERRE—all (save perhaps Raynal) deists or else pantheists or atheists—it becomes clear that the intelligence of France was predominantly rationalistic before the Revolution, though the mass of the nation certainly was not.

It is necessary to deprecate Mr. Lecky's statement (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 176) that "Raynal has taken, with Diderot, a place in French literature which is probably permanent"—an estimate as far astray as the declaration on the same page that the English deists are buried in "unbroken silence." Raynal's vogue in his day was indeed immense (cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ch. xv); and Edmond Scherer (*Études sur la litt. du 18e Siècle*, 1891, pp. 277-78) held that Raynal's *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* had had more influence on the French Revolution than even Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. But the book has long been discredited (cp. Scherer, pp. 275-76). A biographical Dictionary of 1844 spoke of it as "cet ouvrage ampoulé qu'on ne lit pas aujourd'hui." Although the first edition (1770) passed the censure only by means of bribery, and the second (1780) was publicly burned, and its author forced to leave France, he was said to reject, in religion, "only the pope, hell, and monks" (Scherer, p. 286); and most of the anti-religious declamation in the first edition of the *Histoire* is said to be from the pen of Diderot, who wrote it very much at random, at Raynal's request.

No list of orthodox names remotely comparable with these can be drawn from the literature of France, or indeed of any other country of that time. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778), the one other pre-eminent figure, though not an anti-Christian propagandist, is distinctly on the side of deism. In the *Contrat Social*,

<sup>1</sup> Liv. i, ch. viii.

writing with express approbation of Hobbes, he declares that "the Christian law is at bottom more injurious than useful to the sound constitution of the State"; and even the famous *Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar* in the *Émile* is anti-revelationist, and practically anti-clerical. He was accordingly anathematized by the Sorbonne, which found in *Émile* nineteen heresies; the book was seized and burned both at Paris and at Geneva within a few weeks of its appearance,<sup>1</sup> and the author decreed to be arrested; even the *Contrat Social* was seized and its vendors imprisoned. All the while he had maintained in *Émile* doctrines of the usefulness of religious delusion and fanaticism. Still, although his temperamental way of regarding things has a clear affinity with some later religious philosophy of a more systematic sort, he undoubtedly made for freethought as well as for the revolutionary spirit in general. Thus the cause of Christianity stood almost denuded of intellectually eminent adherents in the France of 1789; for even among the writers who had dealt with public questions without discussing religion, or who had criticized Rousseau and the *philosophes*—as the Abbés Mably, Morellet, Millot—the tone was essentially rationalistic.

It has been justly enough argued, concerning Rousseau (see below, p. 287), that the generation of the Revolution made him its prophet in his own despite, and that had he lived twenty years longer he would have been its vehement adversary. But this does not alter the facts as to his influence. A great writer of emotional genius, like Rousseau, inevitably impels men beyond the range of his own ideals, as in recent times Ruskin and Tolstoy, both anti-Socialists, have led thousands towards Socialism. In his own generation and the next, Rousseau counted essentially for criticism of the existing order; and it was the revolutionaries, never the conservatives, who acclaimed him. De Tocqueville (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 33) speaks of his "impiété dogmatique." Martin du Theil, in his *J. J. Rousseau apologiste de la religion chrétienne* (2e édit. 1840), makes out his case by identifying emotional deism with Christianity, as did Rousseau himself when he insisted that "the true Christianity is only natural religion well explained." Rousseau's praise of the gospel and of the character of Jesus was such as many deists acquiesced in. Similar language, in the mouth of Matthew Arnold, gave rather more offence to Gladstone, as a believing Christian, than did the language of simple unbelief; and a recent Christian polemist, at the close of a copious monograph, has repudiated the association of Rousseau with the faith (see J. F. Nourrisson, *J. J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, p. 497 sq.). What is true of him is

<sup>1</sup> Bachaumont, juin 22; juillet 9, 20, 27; novembre 14, 1762.



that he was more religiously a theist than Voltaire, whose impeachment of Providence in the poem on the Earthquake of Lisbon he sought strenuously though not very persuasively to refute in a letter to the author. But, with all his manifold inconsistencies, which may be worked down to the neurosis so painfully manifest in his life and in his relations to his contemporaries, he never writes as a believer in the dogmas of Christianity or in the principle of revelation; and it was as a deist that he was recognized by his Christian contemporaries. A demi-Christian is all that Michelet will call him. His compatriot the Swiss pastor Roustan, located in London, directed against him his *Offrande aux Autels et à la Patrie, ou Défense du Christianisme* (1764), regarding him as an assailant. The work of the Abbé Bergier, *Le Déisme réfuté par lui-même* (1765, and later), takes the form of letters addressed to Rousseau, and is throughout an attack on his works, especially the *Emile*. When, therefore, Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 475) speaks of him as not having attacked Christianity, and Lord Morley (*Rousseau*, ch. xiv) treats him as creating a religious reaction against the deists, they do not fully represent his influence on his time. As we have seen, he stimulated Voltaire to new audacities by his example.

17. An interlude in the critical campaign, little noticed at the time, developed importance a generation later. In 1753 JEAN ASTRUC, doctor of medicine, published after long hesitation his *Conjectures on the original documents which Moses seems to have used in composing the book of Genesis*. Only in respect of his flash of insight into the composite structure of the Pentateuch was Astruc a freethinker. His hesitation to publish was due to his fear that *les prétendus esprits forts* might make a bad use of his work; and he was quite satisfied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch as it stands. The denial of that authorship, implied in the criticisms of Hobbes and Spinoza, he described as "the disease of the last century." This attitude may explain the lack of interest in Astruc's work shown by the freethinkers of the time.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, by his perception of the clue given by the narrative use of the two names Yahweh and Elohim in Genesis, he laid a new foundation of the Higher Criticism of the Bible in modern times, advancing alike on Spinoza and on Simon. For freethought he had "built better than he knew."

<sup>1</sup> Grimm notices Astruc's *Dissertations sur l'immortalité, l'immaterialité, et la liberté de l'âme*, published in 1755 (Corr. i. 438), but not his *Conjectures*. At his death (1766) he pronounces him "un des hommes les plus décriés de Paris." "Il passait pour méchant, fourbe, méchant, en un mot pour un très-malhonorable homme." "Il était violent et emporté, et d'une avarice sordide." Finally, he died "sans sacrements" after having "fait le dévot" and attached himself to the Jesuits in their day of power. Corr. v. 98. But Grimm was a man of many hates, and not the best of historians.

18. In the select Parisian arena of the Académie, the intellectual movement of the age is as it were dramatized; and there more clearly than in the literary record we can trace the struggle of opinions, from the admission of Voltaire (1746) onwards. In the old days the Académie had been rather the home of convention, royalism, and orthodoxy than of ideas, though before Voltaire there were some freethinking members of the lesser Académies, notably Boindin.<sup>1</sup> The admission of Montesquieu (1728), after much opposition from the court, preludes a new era; and from the entrance of Voltaire, fourteen years after his first attempt,<sup>2</sup> the atmosphere begins perceptibly to change. When, in 1727, the academicien Bonamy had read a memoir *On the character and the paganism of the emperor Julian*, partly vindicating him against the aspersions of the Christian Fathers, the Academy feared to print the paper, though its author was a devout Catholic.<sup>3</sup> When the Abbé La Bletterie, also orthodox, read to the Academy portions of his *Vie de Julien*, the members were not now scandalized, though the Abbé's Jansenism moved the King to veto his nomination. So, when Blanchard in 1735 read a memoir on *Les exorcismes magiques* there was much trepidation among the members, and again the Secretary inserted merely an analysis, concluding with the words of Philetas, "Believe and fear God; beware of questioning."<sup>4</sup> Even such a play of criticism as the challenging of the early history of Rome by Lévesque de Pouilly (brother of Lévesque de Burigny) in a dissertation before the Académie in 1722, roused the fears and the resentment of the orthodox; the Abbé Sallier, in undertaking to refute him, insinuated that he had shown a spirit which might be dangerous to other beliefs; and whispers of atheism passed among the academicians.<sup>5</sup> Pouilly, who had been made a freethinker by English contacts, went again to England later, and spent his last years at Rheims.<sup>6</sup> His thesis was much more powerfully sustained in 1738 by Beaufort, in the famous dissertation *Sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire romaine*; but Beaufort was of a refugee-Huguenot stock; his book was published, under his initials, at Utrecht; and not till 1753 did the Académie award him a medal—on the score of an earlier treatise. And in 1748 the *Religio veterum Persarum* of the English Orientalist Hyde, published as long before as 1700, found a

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, pp. 55-56.

<sup>2</sup> Voltaire's various stratagems to secure election are not to his credit. See Paul Mesnard, *Histoire de l'Académie française*, 1857, pp. 68-74. But even Montesquieu is said to have resorted to some questionable devices for the same end. *Id.* p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions*, pp. 54-55, 94, 308.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 116-20.

<sup>6</sup> Where he was lieutenant-général, and died in 1750.



vehement assailant within the Academy in the Abbé Foucher, who saw danger in a favourable view of any heathen religion.

Yet even in the time of Louis XIV the Abbé Mongault, tutor of the son of the Regent, and noted alike for his private freethinking and for the rigid orthodoxy which he instilled into his pupil, treated the historic subject of the divine honours rendered to Roman governors with such latitude as to elicit from Freret, in his *éloge* of Mongault, the remark that the tutor had reserved to himself a liberty of thought which he doubtless felt to be dangerous in a prince.<sup>1</sup> And after 1750 the old order can be seen passing away. D'Argenson notes in his diary in 1754: "I observe in the Académie de belles-lettres, of which I am a member, that there begins to be a decided stir against the priests. It began to show itself at the death of Boindin, to whom our bigots refused a service at the Oratory and a public commemoration. Our deist philosophers were shocked, and ever since, at each election, they are on guard against the priests and the bigots. Nowhere is this division so marked, and it begins to bear fruits."<sup>2</sup> The old statesman indicates his own sympathies by adding: "Why has a bad name been made of the title of *deist*? It is that of those who have true religion in their hearts, and who have abjured a superstition that is destructive to the whole world." It was in this year that D'Alembert, who took nearly as much pains to stay out as Voltaire had done to enter,<sup>3</sup> was elected a member; and with two leading *encyclopédistes* in the forty, and a friendly abbé (Duclos) in the secretaryship (1755), and another zealous frēethinker, Lévesque de Burigny, admitted in 1756,<sup>4</sup> the fortunes of freethought were visibly rising. Its influence was thrown on the side of the academic orator Thomas, a sincere believer but a hater of all persecution, and as such offensive to the Church party.<sup>5</sup>

19. In 1759 there came a check. The *Encyclopédie*, which had been allowed to resume publication after its first suppression in 1752, was again stopped; and the battle between *philosophes* and fanatics, dramatized for the time being in Palissot's comedy *Les Philosophes* and in Voltaire's rejoinder to Fréron, *L'Écossaise*, came to be fought out in the Academy itself. The poet Lefranc de Pompignan,<sup>6</sup> elected in 1759 without any opposition from the free-thinkers, had in his youth translated Pope's "Deist's Prayer," and had suffered for it to the extent of being deprived by D'Aguesseau of

<sup>1</sup> Maury, pp. 53, 86-87.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Mesnard, as cited, pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 82-84. It is noteworthy that the orthodox Thomas, and not any of the *philosophes*, was the first to impeach the Government in academic discourses. Mesnard, pp. 82-84, 100 sq.

<sup>4</sup> "L'excellent Pompignan," M. Lanson calls him, p. 723.

<sup>5</sup> *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 181.

<sup>6</sup> Maury, p. 315.

his official charge<sup>1</sup> for six months. With such a past, with a keen concern for status, and with a character that did not stick at tergiversation, Pompignan saw fit to signalize his election by making his *discours de réception* (March, 1760) a violent attack on the whole philosophic school, which, in his conclusion, he declared to be undermining "equally the throne and the altar." The academicians heard him out in perfect silence, leaving it to the few pietists among the audience to applaud; but as soon as the reports reached Ferney there began the vengeance of Voltaire. First came a leaflet of stinging sentences, each beginning with *Quand*: "When one has translated and even exaggerated the 'Deist's Prayer' composed by Pope.....," and so on. The maddened Pompignan addressed a fatuous memorial to the King (who notoriously hated the *philosophes*, and had assented only under petticoat influence to Voltaire's election<sup>2</sup>); and, presuming to print it without the usual official sanction, suffered at the hands of Malesherbes the blow of having the printer's plant smashed. Other combatants entered the fray. Voltaire's leaflet "*les quand*" was followed by "*les si, les pour, les qui, les quoi, les car, les ah!*"—by him or others—and the master-mocker produced in swift succession three satires in verse,<sup>3</sup> all accompanied by murderous prose annotations. The speedy result was Pompignan's retirement into provincial life. He could not face the merciless hail of rejoinders; and when at his death, twenty-five years later, the Abbé Maury had to pronounce his *éloge*, the mention of his famous humiliation was hardly tempered by compassion.<sup>4</sup>

20. Voltaire could not compass, as he for a time schemed, the election of Diderot; but other *philosophes* of less note entered from time to time;<sup>5</sup> Marmontel was elected in 1763; and when in 1764 the Academy's prize for poetry was given to Chamfort for a piece which savoured of what were then called "the detestable principles of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Helvétius," and in 1768 its prize for eloquence went to the same writer, the society as a whole had acquired a certain character for impiety.<sup>6</sup> In 1767 there had occurred the famous ecclesiastical explosion over Marmontel's philosophic romance *Bélisaire*, a performance in which it is somewhat difficult to-day to detect any exciting quality. It was by a chapter in praise of toleration that the "universal and mediocre

<sup>1</sup> "Les provisions de sa charge pendant six mois en 1736." Voltaire, Lettre à Mme. D'Épinay, 13 juin, 1760. "Je le servis dans cette affaire," adds Voltaire.

<sup>2</sup> Mesnard, pp. 67, 71, 73, 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Pauvre Diable, ouvrage en vers aisés de feu M. Vadé, mis en lumière par Catherine Vadé, sa cousine* (falsely dated 1758); *La Vanité*; and *Le Russe à Paris*.

<sup>4</sup> Mesnard, pp. 86-92.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 93-94.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 95-96.



Marmontel"<sup>1</sup> secured from the Sorbonne the finest advertisement ever given to a work of fiction, the ecclesiastics of the old school being still too thoroughly steeped in the past to realize that a gospel of persecution was a bad wacery for a religion that was being more and more put on the defensive. Only an angry fear before the rising flood of unlicensed literature, combining with the long-baffled desire to strike some blow at freethinking, could have moved the Sorbonne to select for censure the duly licensed work<sup>2</sup> of a popular academician and novelist; and it should be remembered that it was at a time of great activity in the unlicensed production of freethinking literature that the attack was made. The blow recoiled signally. The book was of course promptly translated into all the languages of Europe, selling by tens of thousands;<sup>3</sup> and two sovereigns took occasion to give it their express approval. These were the Empress Catherine (who caused the book to be translated by members of her court while she was making a tour of her empire, she herself taking a chapter), and the Empress Maria-Theresa. From Catherine, herself a freethinker, the approbation might have been expected; but the known orthodoxy and austerity of Maria-Theresa made her support the more telling. In France a small literary tempest raged for a year. Marmontel published his correspondence with the syndic of the Sorbonne and with Voltaire; and in all there appeared some dozen documents *pro* and *con*, among them an anonymous satire by Turgot, *Les xxxvii verités opposées aux xxxvii impiétés de Bélisaire*, "Par un Bachelier Ubiquiste,"<sup>4</sup> which, with the contributions of Voltaire, gave the victim very much the best of the battle.

21. Alongside of the more strictly literary or humanist movement, too, there went on one of a scientific kind, which divided into two lines, a speculative and a practical. On the former the free-lance philosopher JULIEN OFFRAY LA METTRIE gave a powerful initial push by his materialistic theses, in which a medical knowledge that for the time was advanced is applied with a very keen if unsystematic reasoning faculty to the primary problem of mind and body; and others after him continued the impulse. La Mettrie produced his *Natural History of the Mind* in 1745;<sup>5</sup> and in 1746

<sup>1</sup> Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> The formal approval of a Sorbonnist was necessary. One refused it; another gave it. Marmontel, *Mémoires*, 1804, iii, 35-36.

<sup>3</sup> Marmontel mentions that while he was still discussing a compromise with the syndic of the Sorbonne, 40,000 copies had been sold throughout Europe. *Mémoires*, iii, 39.

<sup>4</sup> This satire was taken by the German freethinker Eberhard, in his *New Apology for Socrates*, as the actual publication of the Sorbonne. Barbier, *Dict. des Ouvr. anon et Pseud.*, 2<sup>e</sup> edit. i, 468.

<sup>5</sup> Published pseudonymously as a translation from the English: *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, traduite de l'Anglais de M. Charp. par feu M. H—, de l'Académie des Sciences. A La Haye, 1745. Republished under the title *Traité de l'âme*.

appeared the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* of the Abbé CONDILLAC, both essentially rationalistic and anti-theological works, though differing in their psychological positions, Condillac being a non-materialist, though a strong upholder of "sensism." La Mettrie followed up his doctrine with the more definitely materialistic but less heedfully planned works, *L'Homme Plante* and *L'Homme Machine* (1748), the second of which, published at Leyden<sup>1</sup> and wickedly dedicated to the pious Baron von Haller, was burned by order of the magistrates, its author being at the same time expelled from Holland. Both books are remarkable for their originality of thought, biological and ethical. Though La Mettrie professed to think the "greatest degree of probability" was in favour of the existence of a personal God,<sup>2</sup> his other writings gave small support to the hypothesis; and even in putting it he rejects any inference as to worship. And he goes on to quote very placidly an atheist who insists that only an atheistic world can attain to happiness. It is notable that he, the typical materialist of his age, seems to have been one of its kindest men, by the consent of all who knew him,<sup>3</sup> though heedless in his life to the point of ending it by eating a monstrous meal out of bravado.

The conventional denunciation of La Mettrie (endorsed by Lord Morley, *Voltaire*, p. 122) proceeds ostensibly upon those of his writings in which he discussed sexual questions with absolute scientific freedom. He, however, insisted that his theoretic discussion had nothing whatever to do with his practice; and there is no evidence that he lived otherwise than as most men did in his age, and ours. Still, the severe censure passed on him by Diderot (*Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron*, ed. 1782, ii, 22-24) seems to convict him of at least levity of character. Voltaire several times holds the same tone. But Diderot writes so angrily that his verdict incurs suspicion.

As Lange notes, there has been much loose generalization as to the place and bearing of La Mettrie in the history of French thought. Hettner, who apparently had not thought it worth while to read him, has ascribed his mental movement to the influence of Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), whereas it had begun in his own *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, published a year before. La Mettrie's originality and influence in general

<sup>1</sup> By Elie Luzac, to whom is ascribed the reply entitled *L'Homme plus que Machine* (1748 also). This is printed in the *Œuvres philosophiques* of La Mettrie as if it were his; and Lange (i, 420) seems to think it was. But the bibliographers ascribe it to Luzac, who was a man of culture and ability.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Homme Machine*, ed. Assézat, 1865, p. 97; *Œuv. philos.* ed. 1774, iii, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 362 sq. (Eng. tr. ii, 78-80); Soury, *Bréviare de l'hist. du matérialisme*, pp. 663, 666-68; Voltaire, *Homélie sur l'athéisme*, end. Frederick the Great, who gave La Mettrie harbourage, support, and friendship, and who was not a bad judge of men, wrote and read in the Berlin Academy the funeral éloge of La Mettrie, and pronounced him "une âme pure et un cœur serviable." By "pure" he meant sincere.



have been underestimated as a result of the hostility set up by disparagement of his character. The idea of a fundamental unity of type in nature—an idea underlying all the successive steps of Lamarck, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Goethe, and others, towards the complete conception of evolution—is set forth by him in *L'Homme Plante* in 1748, the year in which appeared De Maillet's *Telliamed*. Buffon follows in time as in thought, only beginning his great work in 1749; Maupertuis, with his pseudonymous dissertation on the *Universal system of Nature*, applies La Mettrie's conception in 1751; and Diderot's *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*, stimulated by Maupertuis, appeared only in 1754. La Mettrie proceeded from the classification of Linnæus, but did not there find his idea. In the words of Lange, "these forgotten writings are in nowise so empty and superficial as is commonly assumed." *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 328-29. Lange seems to have been the first to make a judicial study of La Mettrie's work, as distinguished from the scandals about his character.

22. A more general influence, naturally, attached to the simple concrete handling of scientific problems. The interest in such questions, noticeable in England at the Restoration and radiating thence, is seen widely diffused in France after the publication of Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, and thenceforward it rapidly strengthens. Barren theological disputations set men not merely against theology, but upon the study of Nature, where real knowledge was visibly possible. To a certain extent the study took openly heretical lines. The Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy, who was four times imprisoned in the Bastille, supplied material of which D'Argens made much use, tending to overthrow the Biblical chronology and to discredit the story of the Flood.<sup>1</sup> Benoît de Maillet (1656-1738), who had been for fifteen years inspector of the French establishments in Egypt and Barbary, left for posthumous publication (1748) a work of which the first title was an anagram of his name, *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionnaire français*. Of this treatise the thesis is that the shell deposits in the Alps and elsewhere showed the sea to have been where land now was; and that the rocks were gradually deposited in their different kinds in the fashion in which even now are being formed mud, sand, and shingle. De Maillet had thus anticipated the central conception of modern geology, albeit retaining many traditional delusions. His abstention from publication during his lifetime testifies to his sense of the danger he underwent, the treatise having been printed by him only in 1735, at the

<sup>1</sup> Salchi, *Lettres sur le Dérisme*, 1759, pp. 177, 197, 239, 283 sq.

age of seventy-nine; and not till ten years after his death was it given to the world, with "a preface and dedication so worded as, in case of necessity, to give the printer a fair chance of falling back on the excuse that the work was intended for a mere *jeu d'esprit*."<sup>1</sup>

The thesis was adopted, indeed plagiarized,<sup>2</sup> by Mirabaud in his *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité* (1751). Strangely enough, Voltaire refused to be convinced, and offered amazing suggestions as to the possible deposit of shells by pilgrims.<sup>3</sup> It is not unlikely that it was Voltaire's opposition rather than any orthodox argumentation that retarded in France the acceptance of an evolutionary view of the origin of the earth and of life. It probably had a more practical effect on scientific thought in England<sup>4</sup>—at least as regards geology: its speculations on the modification of species, which loosely but noticeably anticipate some of the inferences of Darwin, found no acceptance anywhere till Lamarck. In the opinion of Huxley, the speculations of Robinet, in the next generation, "are rather behind than in advance of those of De Maillet";<sup>5</sup> and it may be added that the former, with his pet theory that all Nature is "animated," and that the stars and planets have the faculty of reproducing themselves like animals, wandered as far from sound bases as De Maillet ever did. The very form of De Maillet's work, indeed, was not favourable to its serious acceptance; and in his case, as in those of so many pioneers of new ideas, errors and extravagances and oversights in regard to matters of detail went to justify "practical" men in dismissing novel speculations. Needless to say, the common run of scientific men remained largely under the influence of religious pre-suppositions in science even when they had turned their backs on the Church. Nonetheless, on all sides the study of natural fact began to play its part in breaking down the dominion of creed. Even in hidebound Protestant Switzerland, the sheer ennui of Puritanism is seen driving the descendants of the Huguenot refugees to the physical sciences for an interest and an occupation, before any free-thinking can safely be avowed; and in France, as Buckle has shown in abundant detail, the study of the physical sciences became for many years before the Revolution almost a fashionable mania. And at the start the Church had contrived that such study should rank as unbelief, and so make unbelievers.

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, essay on *Darwin on the Origin of Species*; R. P. A. ed. of *Twelve Lectures and Essays*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> See the parallel passages in the *Lettres Critiques* of the Abbé Gauchat, vol. xv (1761), p. 192 sq.

<sup>3</sup> See his essay *Des Singularités de la Nature*, ch. xii, and his *Dissertation sur les changements arrivés dans notre globe*.

<sup>4</sup> Eng. tr. 1750.

<sup>5</sup> Essay cited, p. 96. The criticism ignores the greater comprehensiveness of Robinet's survey of nature.



When Buffon<sup>1</sup> in 1749-50 published his *Histoire Naturelle*, the delight which was given to most readers by its finished style was paralleled by the wrath which its *Théorie de la Terre* aroused among the clergy. After much discussion Buffon received early in 1751 from the Sorbonne an official letter specifying as reprehensible in his book fourteen propositions which he was invited to retract. He stoically obeyed in a declaration to the effect that he had "no intention to contradict the text of Scripture," and that he believed "most firmly all there related about the creation," adding: "I abandon everything in my book respecting the formation of the earth."<sup>2</sup> Still he was attacked as an unbeliever by the Bishop of Auxerre in that prelate's pastoral against the thesis of de Prades.<sup>3</sup> During the rest of his life he outwardly conformed to religious usage, but all men knew that in his heart he believed what he had written; and the memory of the affront that the Church had thus put upon so honoured a student helped to identify her cause no less with ignorance than with insolence and oppression. For all such insults, and for the long roll of her cruelties, the Church was soon to pay a tremendous penalty.

23. But science, like theology, had its schisms, and the rationalizing camp had its own strifes. MAUPERTUIS, for instance, is remembered mainly as one of the victims of the mockery of Voltaire (which he well earned by his own antagonism at the court of Frederick); yet he was really an energetic man of science, and had preceded Voltaire in setting up in France the Newtonian against the Cartesian physics. In his *System of Nature*<sup>4</sup> (not to be confused with the later work of d'Holbach under the same title) he in 1751 propounded a new version of the hylozoisms of ancient Greece; developed the idea of an underlying unity in the forms of natural life, already propounded by La Mettrie in his *L'Homme Plante*; connected it with Leibnitz's formula of the economy of nature ("minimum of action"—the germ of the modern "line of least resistance"), and at the same time anticipated some of the special philosophic positions of Kant.<sup>5</sup> Diderot, impressed by but professedly dissenting from Maupertuis's *Système* in his *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature* (1754), promptly pointed out that the conception

<sup>1</sup> George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707-1788.

<sup>2</sup> Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 12th ed. 1875, i, 57-58.

<sup>3</sup> *Suite de l'Apologie de M. l'Abbé De Prades*, 1752, p. 37 sq.

<sup>4</sup> *Dissertatio inauguralis metaphysica de universali naturæ systemate*, published at Göttingen as the doctoral thesis of an imaginary Dr. Baumann, 1751. In French, 1753.

<sup>5</sup> Soury, p. 579. The later speculations of Maupertuis by their extravagance discredited the earlier.

of a primordially vitalized atom excluded that of a Creator, and for his own part thereafter took that standpoint.<sup>1</sup>

In 1754 came the *Traité des Sensations* of Condillac, in which is most systematically developed the physio-psychological conception of man as an "animated statue," of which the thought is wholly conditioned by the senses. The mode of approach had been laid down before by La Mettrie, by Diderot, and by Buffon; and Condillac is rather a developer and systematizer than an originator;<sup>2</sup> but in this case the process of unification was to the full as important as the first steps;<sup>3</sup> and Condillac has an importance which is latterly being rediscovered by the school of Spencer on the one hand and by that of James on the other. Condillac, commonly termed a materialist, no more held the legendary materialistic view than any other so named; and the same may be said of the next figure in the "materialistic" series, J. B. ROBINET, a Frenchman settled at Amsterdam, after having been, it is said, a Jesuit. His *Nature* (4 vols. 1761-1768) is a remarkable attempt to reach a strictly naturalistic conception of things.<sup>4</sup> But he is a theorist, not an investigator. Even in his fixed idea that the universe is an "animal" he had perhaps a premonition of the modern discovery of the immense diffusion of bacterial life; but he seems to have had more deriders than disciples. He founds at once on Descartes and on Leibnitz, but in his *Philosophical Considerations on the natural gradation of living forms* (1768) he definitely sets aside theism as illusory, and puts ethics on a strictly scientific and human footing,<sup>5</sup> extending the arguments of Hume and Hutcheson somewhat on the lines of Mandeville.<sup>6</sup> On another line of reasoning a similar application of Mandeville's thesis had already been made by HELVÉTIUS in his *Traité de l'Esprit*<sup>7</sup> (1758), a work which excited a hostility now difficult to understand, but still reflected in censures no less surprising.

One of the worst misrepresentations in theological literature is the account of Helvétius by the late Principal Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 158) as appealing to government "to promote luxury, and, through luxury, public good, by abolishing all those laws that cherish a false modesty and restrain

<sup>1</sup> "Scheinbar bekämpft er Maupertuis desswegen, aber im geheimen stimmt er ihm bei" (Rosenkranz, i, 144).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that by Condillac's avowal he was much aided by his friend Mdle. Ferrand.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Réthoré, *Condillac, ou l'empirisme et le rationalisme*, 1864, ch. i.

<sup>4</sup> Lange, ii, 27, 29; Soury, pp. 603-44.

<sup>5</sup> Soury, pp. 596-600; Lange, ii, 27.

<sup>6</sup> Oddly enough he became ultimately press censor! He lived till 1820, dying at Rennes at the age of 85.

<sup>7</sup> This may best be translated *Treatise on the Mind*. The English translation of 1759 rep. 1807 is entitled *De l'Esprit: or, Essays on the Mind*, etc.



libertinage." Helvétius simply pressed the consequences of the existing theory of luxury, which for his own part he disclaimed. *De l'Esprit*, Disc. ii, ch. xv. Dr. Pünjer (i, 462) falls so far below his usual standard as to speak of Helvétius in a similar fashion. As against such detraction it is fitting to note that Helvétius, like La Mettrie, was one of the most lovable and most beloved men of his time, though, like him, sufficiently licentious in his youth.

It was at once suppressed by royal order as scandalous, licentious, and dangerous, though Helvétius held a post at court as *maitre d'hôtel* to the Queen. Ordered to make a public retraction, he did so in a letter addressed to a Jesuit; and this being deemed insufficient, he had to sign another, "so humiliating," wrote Grimm,<sup>1</sup> "that one would not have been astonished to see a man take refuge with the Hottentots rather than put his name to such avowals." The wits explained that the censor who had passed the book, being an official in the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, had treated *De l'Esprit* as belonging to that department.<sup>2</sup> A swarm of replies appeared, and the book was formally burnt, with Voltaire's poem *Sur la loi naturelle*, and several obscure works of older standing.<sup>3</sup> The *De l'Esprit*, appearing alongside of the ever-advancing *Encyclopédie*,<sup>4</sup> was in short a formidable challenge to the powers of bigotry.

Its real faults are lack of system, undue straining after popularity, some hasty generalization, and a greater concern for the air of paradox than for persuasion; but it abounds in acuteness and critical wisdom, and it definitely and seriously founds public ethics on utility. Its most serious error, the assumption that all men are born with equal faculties, and that education is the sole differentiating force, was repeated in our own age by John Stuart Mill; but in Helvétius the error is balanced by the thoroughly sound and profoundly important thesis that the general superiorities of nations are the result of their culture-conditions and politics.<sup>5</sup> The overbalance of his stress on self-interest<sup>6</sup> is an error easily soluble. On the other hand, we have the memorable testimony of BECCARIA that it was the work of Helvétius that inspired him to his great effort for the humanizing of penal laws and policy;<sup>7</sup> and the only

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance*, ii, 262.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> At the time the pietists declared that Diderot had collaborated in *De l'Esprit*. This was denied by Grimm, who affirmed that Diderot and Helvétius were little acquainted, and rarely met; but his Secretary, Meister, wrote in 1786 that the finest pages in the book were Diderot's. *Id.* p. 294, note. In his sketch *à la mémoire de Diderot* (1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires*, 1821, p. 425, note), Meister speaks of a number of "belles pages," but does not particularize.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Morley's criticism. *Diderot*, ed. 1884, pp. 331-32.

<sup>7</sup> Beccaria's Letter to Morellet, cited in ch. i of J. A. Farrer's ed. of the *Crimes and Punishments*, p. 6. It is noteworthy that the partial reform effected earlier in England

less notable testimony of Bentham that Helvétius was *his* teacher and inspirer.<sup>1</sup> It may be doubted whether any such fruits can be claimed for the teachings of the whole of the orthodox moralists of the age. For the rest, Helvétius is not to be ranked among the great abstract thinkers; but it is noteworthy that his thinking went on advancing to the end. Always greatly influenced by Voltaire, he did not philosophically harden as did his master; and though in his posthumous work, *Les Progrès de la Raison dans la recherche du Vrai* (published in 1775), he stands for deism against atheism, the argument ends in the pantheism to which Voltaire had once attained, but did not adhere.

24. Over all of these men, and even in some measure over Voltaire, DIDEROT (1713-1784) stands pre-eminent, on retrospect, for variety of power and depth and subtlety of thought; though for these very reasons, as well as because some of his most masterly works were never printed in his lifetime, he was less of a recognized popular force than some of his friends. In his own mental history he reproduces the course of the French thought of his time. Beginning as a deist, he assailed the contemporary materialists; in the end, with whatever of inconsistency, he was emphatically an atheist and a materialist. One of his most intimate friends was Damilaville, of whom Voltaire speaks as a vehement anti-theist;<sup>2</sup> and his biographer Naigeon, who at times overstated his positions but always revered him, was the most zealous atheist of his day.<sup>3</sup>

Compare, as to Diderot's position, Soury's contention (p. 577) that we shall never make an atheist and a materialist out of "this enthusiastic artist, this poet-pantheist" (citing Rosenkranz in support), with his own admissions, pp. 589-90, and with Lord Morley's remarks, pp. 33, 401, 418. See also Lange, i, 310 sq.; ii, 63 (Eng. tr. ii, 32, 256). In the affectionate *éloge* of his friend Meister (1786) there is an express avowal that "it had been much to be desired for the reputation of Diderot, perhaps even for the honour of his age, that he had not been an atheist, or that he had been so with less zeal." The fact is thus put beyond reasonable doubt. In the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, under date September 15, 1765 (vii, 366), there is a letter in criticism of Descartes, thoroughly atheistic in its reasoning, which is almost certainly by Diderot. And if the criticism of Voltaire's *Dieu*, above referred to (p. 231), be not by him, he was certainly in entire agreement with it, as with Grimm in general. Rosenkranz

by Ogilethorpe, on behalf of imprisoned debtors (1730-32), belongs to the time of propagandist deism there.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre à d'Alembert, 9 janvier, 1773.

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *Diderot*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Rosenkranz, *Vorbericht*, p. vi.



finally (ii, 421) sums up that "Diderot was als Atheist Pantheist," which is merely a way of saying that he was scientifically monistic in his atheism. Lange points out in this connection (i, 310) that the Hegelian schema of philosophic evolution, "with its sovereign contempt for chronology," has wrought much confusion as to the real developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is recorded that Diderot's own last words in serious conversation were: "The beginning of philosophy is incredulity"; and it may be inferred from his writings that his first impulses to searching thought came from his study of Montaigne, who must always have been for him one of the most congenial of spirits.<sup>1</sup> At an early stage of his independent mental life we find him turning to the literature which in that age yielded to such a mind as his the largest measure both of nutriment and stimulus—the English. In 1745 he translated Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit*; and he must have read with prompt appreciation the other English freethinkers then famous. Ere long, however, he had risen above the deistical plane of thought, and grappled with the fundamental issues which the deists took for granted, partly because of an innate bent to psychological analysis, partly because he was more interested in scientific problems than in scholarly research. The *Pensées philosophiques*, published in 1746, really deserve their name; and though they exhibit him as still a satisfied deist, and an opponent of the constructive atheism then beginning to suggest itself, they contain abstract reasonings sufficiently disturbing to the deistic position.<sup>2</sup> The *Promenade du Sceptique* (written about 1747, published posthumously) goes further, and presents tentatively the reply to the design argument which was adopted by Hume.

In its brilliant pages may be found a conspectus of the intellectual life of the day, on the side of the religious problem. Every type of thinker is there tersely characterized—the orthodox, the deist, the atheist, the sheer skeptic, the scoffer, the pantheist, the solipsist, and the freethinking libertine, the last figuring as no small nuisance to the serious unbeliever. So drastic is the criticism of orthodoxy that the book was unprintable in its day;<sup>3</sup> and it was little known even in manuscript. But ere long there appeared the *Letter on the Blind, for the use of those who see* (1749), in which a logical rebuttal alike of the ethical and the cosmological assumptions of theism, developed from hints in the *Pensées*, is put in the mouth of the blind English

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ed. 1884, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. § 21.  
<sup>3</sup> A police agent seized the MS. in Diderot's library, and Diderot could not get it back. Malesherbes, the censor, kept it safe for him!

mathematician, Sanderson. It is not surprising that whereas the *Pensées* had been, with some other books, ordered by the Paris Parlement to be burnt by the common hangman, the *Lettre sur les Aveugles* led to his arrest and an imprisonment of six months<sup>1</sup> in the Château de Vincennes. Both books had of course been published without licence;<sup>2</sup> but the second book was more than a defiance of the censorship: it was a challenge alike to the philosophy and the faith of Christendom; and as such could not have missed denunciation.<sup>3</sup>

But Diderot was not the kind of man to be silenced by menaces. In the famous Sorbonne thesis of the Abbé de Prades (1751) he probably had, as we have seen, some share; and when De Prades was condemned and deprived of his licence (1752) Diderot wrote the third part of the *Apologie* (published by De Prades in Holland), which defended his positions; and possibly assisted in the other parts.<sup>4</sup> The hand of Diderot perhaps may be discovered in the skilful allusions to the skeptical *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Huet, which De Prades professes to have translated when at his seminary, seeking there the antidote to the poison of the deists. The entire handling of the question of pagan and Christian miracles, too, suggests the skilled dialectician, though it is substantially an adaptation of Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. The alternate eulogy and criticism of Locke are likely to be his, as is indeed the abundant knowledge of English thought shown alike in the thesis and in the *Apologie*. Whether he wrote the passage which claims to rebut an argument in his own *Pensées philosophiques*<sup>5</sup> is surely doubtful. But his, certainly, is the further reply to the pastoral of the Jansenist Bishop of Auxerre against de Prades's thesis, in which the perpetual disparagement of reason by Catholic theologians is denounced<sup>6</sup> as the most injurious of all procedures against religion. And his, probably, is the peroration<sup>7</sup> arraigning the Jansenists and

<sup>1</sup> According to Naigeon (*Mémoires*, 1821, p. 131), three months and ten days.

<sup>2</sup> The *Lettre* purports, like so many other books of that and the next generation, to be published "A Londres."

<sup>3</sup> Diderot's daughter, in her memoir of him, speaks of his imprisonment in the Bastille as brought about through the resentment of a lady of whom he had spoken slightly; and her husband left a statement in MS. to the same effect (printed at the end of the *Mémoires* by Naigeon). The lady is named as Madame Dupré de Saint-Maur, a mistress of the King, and the offence is said to have been committed in the story entitled *Le Pigeon blanc*. Howsoever this may have been, the prosecution was quite in the spirit of the period, and the earlier *Pensées* were made part of the case against him. See Delort, *Hist. de la détention des philosophes*, 1829, ii, 208-16. M. de Vandeul-Diderot testifies that the Marquis Du Chatelet, Governor of Vincennes, treated his prisoner very kindly. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 425) does not seem to have fully read the *Lettre*, which he describes as merely discussing the differentiation of thought and sensation among the blind.

<sup>4</sup> His friend Meister (*A la mémoire de Diderot*, 1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires de Diderot*, 1821, p. 424) writes as if Diderot had written the whole *Apologie* "in a few days." The third part, a reply to the pastoral of the Bishop of Auxerre, appeared separately as a *Suite* to the others.

<sup>5</sup> *Apologie*, as cited, 2e partie, p. 87 sq.

<sup>6</sup> *Observations sur l'instruction pastorale de Mons. l'Evêque d'Auxerre*, Berlin, 1752, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 102 sq.



imputing to their fanaticism and superstition, their miracle-mongering and their sectarian bitterness, the discredit which among thinking men had latterly fallen upon Church and creed alike.<sup>1</sup>

De Prades, who in his thesis and *Apologie* had always professed to be a believing Christian, was not a useful recruit to rationalism. Passing from Holland to Berlin, he was there appointed, through the influence of Voltaire, reader and amanuensis to the King,<sup>2</sup> who in 1754 arranged for him an official reconciliation with the Church. A formal retractation was sent to the Pope, the Sorbonne, and the Bishop of Montauban;<sup>3</sup> and Frederick in due course presented him to a Catholic canonry at Glogau. In 1757, however, he was put under arrest on the charge, it is commonly said, of supplying military information to his countrymen;<sup>4</sup> and thereafter, returning to France in 1759, he obtained a French benefice. Diderot, who was now a recognized champion of freethought, turned away with indignation.

Thenceforward he never faltered on his path. It is his peculiar excellence to be an original and innovating thinker not only in philosophy but in psychology, in æsthetics, in ethics, in dramatic art; and his endless and miscellaneous labours in the *Encyclopédie*, of which he was the most loyal and devoted producer, represent an extraordinary range of interests. He suffered from his position as a hack writer and as a forced dissembler in his articles on religious matters; and there is probably a very real connection between his compulsory insincerities<sup>5</sup> in the *Encyclopédie*—to say nothing of the official prosecution of that and of others of his works—and his misdeeds in the way of indecent fiction. When organized society is made to figure as the heartless enemy of thinking men, it is no great wonder if they are careless at times about the effect of their writings on society. But it stands to his lasting honour that his sufferings at the hands of priests, printers, and *parlements* never soured his natural goodness of heart.<sup>7</sup> Having in his youth known a day's unrelieved hunger, he made a vow that he would never refuse help to any human being; and, says his daughter, no vow was ever more faithfully kept. No one in trouble was ever turned away from his

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, iv, 188.

<sup>3</sup> "Quelle abominable homme!" he writes to Mdle. Voland (15 juillet, 1759); and Lord Morley pronounces de Prades a rascal (*Diderot*, p. 98). Carlyle is inarticulate with disgust—but as much against the original heresy as against the treason to Frederick. As to that, Thiébauld was convinced that de Prades was innocent and calumniated. Everybody at court, he declares, held the same view. *Mes Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, v, 402-404.

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear how these are to be distinguished from the mutilations of the later volumes by his treacherous publisher Le Breton. Of this treachery the details are given by Grimm, *Corr. litt.* ed. 1829, vii, 144 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Buckle's account of him (1-vol. ed. p. 426) as "burning with hatred against his persecutors" after his imprisonment is overdrawn. He was a poor hater.

<sup>6</sup> Carlyle, *Frederick*, bk. xviii, ch. ix, end.

<sup>7</sup> Carlyle, as cited.

door; and even his enemies were helped when they were base enough to beg of him. It seems no exaggeration to say that the bulk of his life was given to helping other people; and the indirect effect of his work, which is rather intellectually disinterested than didactic, is no less liberative and humanitarian. "To do good, and to find truth," were his mottoes for life.

His daughter, Madame de Vandeul, who in her old age remained tranquilly divided between the religion instilled into her by her pious mother and the rationalism she had gathered from her father and his friends, testified, then, to his constant goodness in the home;<sup>1</sup> and his father bore a similar testimony, contrasting him with his pious brother.<sup>2</sup> He was, in his way, as beneficent as Voltaire, without Voltaire's faults of private malice; and his life's work was a great ministry of light. It was Goethe who said of him in the next generation that "whoever holds him or his doings cheaply is a Philistine." His large humanity reaches from the planes of expert thought to that of popular feeling; and while by his *Letter on the Blind* he could advance speculative psychology and pure philosophy, he could by his tale *The Nun* (*La Religieuse*,<sup>3</sup> written about 1760, published 1796) enlist the sympathies of the people against the rule of the Church. It belonged to his character to be generously appreciative of all excellence; he delighted in other men's capacity as in pictures and poetry; and he loved to praise. At a time when Bacon and Hobbes were little regarded in England he made them newly famous throughout Europe by his praises. In him was realized Bacon's saying, *Admiratio semen scientiae*, in every sense, for his curiosity was as keen as his sensibility.

25. With Diderot were specially associated, in different ways, D'ALEMBERT, the mathematician, for some years his special colleague on the *Encyclopédie*, and Baron D'HOLBACH. The former, one of the staunchest friends of Voltaire, though a less invincible fighter than Diderot, counted for practical freethought by his miscellaneous articles, his little book on the Jesuits (1765), his *Pensées philosophiques*, his physics, and the general rationalism of his Preliminary

<sup>1</sup> Madame Diderot, says her daughter, was very upright as well as very religious, but her temper, "éternellement grondeur, faisait de notre intérieur un enfer, dont mon père était l'ange consolateur" (Letter to Meister, in *Notice* pref. to *Lettres Inédites de Mme. de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 62).

<sup>2</sup> "Hélas! disait mon excellent grand-père, j'ai deux fils: l'un sera sûrement un saint, et je crains bien que l'autre ne soit damné; mais je ne puis vivre avec le saint, et je suis très heureux du temps que je passe avec le damné" (Letter of Mme. de Vandeul, last cited). Freethinker as he was, his fellow-townsmen officially requested in 1780 to be allowed to pay for a portrait of him for public exhibition, and the bronze bust he sent them was placed in the hôtel de ville (MS. of M. de Vandeul-Diderot, as cited).

<sup>3</sup> Madame de Vandeul states that this story was motivated by the case of Diderot's sister, who died mad at the age of 27 or 28 (Letter above cited; Rosenkranz, i, 9).



Discourse to the *Encyclopédie*. It is noteworthy that in his intimate correspondence with Voltaire he never avows theism, and that his and Diderot's friend, the atheist Damilaville, died in his arms.<sup>1</sup> On Dumarsais, too, he penned an *éloge* of which Voltaire wrote: "Dumarsais only begins to live since his death; you have given him existence and immortality."<sup>2</sup> And perpetual secretary as he was of the Academy, the fanatical daughter of Madame Geoffrin could write to him in 1776: "For many years you have set all respectable people against you by your indecent and imprudent manner of speaking against religion."<sup>3</sup> Baron d'Holbach, a naturalized German of large fortune, was on the other hand one of the most strenuous propagandists of freethought in his age. Personally no less beloved than Helvétius,<sup>4</sup> he gave his life and his fortune to the work of enlightening men on all the lines on which he felt they needed light. Much of the progress of the physical sciences in pre-revolutionary France was due to the long series—at least eleven in all—of his translations of solid treatises from the German; and his still longer series of original works and translations from the English in all branches of freethought—a really astonishing movement of intellectual energy despite the emotion attaching to the subject-matter—was for the most part prepared in the same essentially scientific temper. Of all the freethinkers of the period he had perhaps the largest range of practical erudition;<sup>5</sup> and he drew upon it with unhasting and unrelenting industry. Imitating the tactic of Voltaire, he produced, with some assistance from Diderot, Naigeon, and others, a small library of anti-Christian treatises under a variety of pseudonyms;<sup>6</sup> and his principal work, the famous *System of Nature* (1770), was put out under the name of Mirabaud, an actual person, then dead. Summing up as it does with stringent force the whole anti-theological propaganda of the age, it has been described as a "thundering engine of revolt and destruction."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre de 2 décembre, 1757.

<sup>3</sup> *Œuvres posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i, 240.

<sup>4</sup> D'Holbach was the original of the character of Wolmar in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, of whom Julie says that he "does good without recompense." "I never saw a man more simply simple" was the verdict of Madame Geoffrin. *Corr. litt. de Grimm* (notice probably by Meister), ed. 1829-31, xiv, 291.

<sup>5</sup> Marmontel says of him that he "avoit tout lu et n'avoit jamais rien oublié d'intéressant." *Mémoires*, 1804, ii, 312.

<sup>6</sup> See a full list of his works (compiled by Julian Hibbert after the list given in the 1821 ed. of Diderot's Works, xii, 115, and rep. in the 1829-31 ed. of Grimm and Diderot's *Correspondance*, xiv, 293), prefixed to Watson's ed. (1834 and later) of the English translation of the *System of Nature*.

<sup>7</sup> Morley, *Diderot*, p. 341. The chapter gives a good account of the book. Cp. Lange, i, 364 sq. (Eng. trans. ii, 26 sq.) as to its materialism. The best pages were said to be by Diderot (*Corr. de Grimm*, as cited, p. 289; the statement of Meister, who makes it also in his *Éloge*). Naigeon denied that Diderot had any part in the *Système*, but in 1820 there was published an edition with "notes and corrections" by Diderot.

It was the first published atheistic<sup>1</sup> treatise of a systematic kind, if we except that of Robinet, issued some years before; and it significantly marks the era of modern freethought, as does the powerful *Essai sur les préjugés*, published in the same year,<sup>2</sup> by its stern impeachment of the sins of monarchy—here carrying on the note struck by Jean Meslier in his manuscript of half-a-century earlier. Rather a practical argument than a dispassionate philosophic research, its polemic against human folly laid it open to the regulation retort that on its own necessarian principles no such polemic was admissible. That retort is, of course, ultimately invalid when the denunciation is resolved into demonstration. If, however, it be termed "shallow" on the score of its censorious treatment of the past,<sup>3</sup> the term will have to be applied to the Hebrew books, to the Gospel Jesus, to the Christian Fathers, to Pascal, Milton, Carlyle, Ruskin, and a good many other prophets, ancient and modern. The synthesis of the book is really emotional rather than philosophic, and hortatory rather than scientific; and it was all the more influential on that account. To the sensation it produced is to be ascribed the edict of 1770 condemning a whole shelf of previous works to be burnt along with it by the common hangman.

26. The death of d'Holbach (1789) brings us to the French Revolution. By that time all the great freethinking propagandists and non-combatant deists of the Voltairean group were gone, save CONDORCET. Voltaire and Rousseau had died in 1778, Helvétius in 1771, Turgot in 1781, D'Alembert in 1783, Diderot in 1784. After all their labours, only the educated minority, broadly speaking, had been made freethinkers; and of these, despite the vogue of the *System of Nature*, only a minority were atheists. Deism prevailed, as we have seen, among the foremost revolutionists; but atheism was relatively rare. Voltaire, indeed, impressed by the number of cultured men of his acquaintance who avowed it, latterly speaks<sup>4</sup> of them as very numerous; and Grimm must have had a good many among the subscribers to his correspondence, to permit of his

<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that the English translation (3 vols. 3rd ed. 1817; 4th ed. 1820) deliberately tampers with the language of the original to the extent of making it deistic. This perversion has been by oversight preserved in all the reprints.

<sup>2</sup> Mirabeau spoke of the *Essai* as "le livre le moins connu, et celui qui mérite le plus l'être." Even the reprint of 1793 had become "extremely rare" in 1822. The book seems to have been specially disquieting to orthodoxy, and was hunted down accordingly.

<sup>3</sup> So Morley, p. 347. It does not occur to Lord Morley, and to the Comtists who take a similar tone, that in thus disparaging past thinkers they are really doing the thing they blame.

<sup>4</sup> *Lettres de Memmius à Cicéron* (1771); *Histoire de Jenni* (1775). In the earlier article, *ATHÉE*, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he speaks of having met in France very good physicists who were atheists. In his letter of September 26, 1770, to Madame Necker, he writes concerning the *Système de la Nature*: "Il est un peu honteux à notre nation que tant de gens aient embrassé si vite une opinion si ridicule." And yet Prof. W. M. Sloane, of Columbia University, still writes of Voltaire, in the manner of English bishops, as "atheistical" (*The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, 1901, p. 26).



penning or passing the atheistic criticism there given of Voltaire's first reply to d'Holbach. Nevertheless, there was no continuous atheistic movement; and after 1789 the new freethinking works run to critical and ethical attack on the Christian system rather than on theism. VOLNEY combined both lines of attack in his famous *Ruins of Empires* (1791); and the learned DUPUIS, in his voluminous *Origin of all Cults* (1795), took an important step, not yet fully reckoned with by later mythologists, towards the mythological analysis of the gospel narrative. After these vigorous performances, the popular progress of French freethought was for long practically suspended<sup>1</sup> by the tumult of the Revolution and the reaction which followed it, though LAPLACE went on his way with his epoch-making theory of the origin of the solar system, for which, as he told Napoleon, he had "no need of the hypothesis" of a God. The admirable CONDORCET had died, perhaps by his own hand, in 1794, when in hiding from the Terrorists, leaving behind him his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, in which the most sanguine convictions of the rationalistic school are reformulated without a trace of bitterness or of despair.

27. No part of the history of freethought has been more distorted than that at which it is embroiled in the French Revolution. The conventional view in England still is that the Revolution was the work of deists and atheists, but chiefly of the latter; that they suppressed Christianity and set up a worship of a Goddess of Reason, represented by a woman of the town; and that the bloodshed of the Terror represented the application of their principles to government, or at least the political result of the withdrawal of religious checks.<sup>2</sup> Those who remember in the briefest summary the records of massacre connected with the affirmation of religious beliefs—the internecine wars of Christian sects under the Roman Empire; the vast slaughters of Manichæans in the East; the bloodshed of the period of propagation in Northern Europe, from Charlemagne onwards; the story of the Crusades, in which nine millions of human beings are estimated to have been destroyed; the generation of wholesale murder of the heretics of Languedoc by the papacy; the protracted savageries of the Hussite War; the early holocaust of Protestant heretics in France; the massacres of

<sup>1</sup> Though in 1797 we have Maréchal's *Code d'une Société d'hommes sans Dieu*, and in 1798 his *Pensées libres sur les prêtres*.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Dr. Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 165) gravely argues that the French Revolution proves the inefficacy of theism without a Trinity to control conduct. He has omitted to compare the theistic bloodshed of the Revolution with the Trinitarian bloodshed of the Crusades, the papal suppression of the Albigenses, the Hussite wars, and other orthodox undertakings.

German peasants and Anabaptists; the reciprocal persecutions in England; the civil strifes of sectaries in Switzerland; the ferocious wars of the French Huguenots and the League; the long-drawn agony of the war of thirty years in Germany; the annihilation of myriads of Mexicans and Peruvians by the conquering Spaniards in the name of the Cross—those who recall these things need spend no time over the proposition that rationalism stands for a removal of restraints on bloodshed. But it is necessary to put concisely the facts as against the legend in the case of the French Revolution.

(a) That many of the leading men among the revolutionists were deists is true; and the fact goes to prove that it was chiefly the men of ability in France who rejected Christianity. Of a number of these the normal attitude was represented in the work of Necker, *Sur l'importance des idées religieuses* (1787), which repudiated the destructive attitude of the few, and may be described as an utterance of pious theism or Unitarianism.<sup>1</sup> Orthodox he cannot well have been, since, like his wife, he was the friend of Voltaire.<sup>2</sup> But the majority of the Constituent Assembly was never even deistic; it professed itself cordially Catholic;<sup>3</sup> and the atheists there might be counted on the fingers of one hand.<sup>4</sup>

The Abbé Bergier, in answering d'Holbach (*Examen du Matérialisme*, ii, ch. i, § 1), denies that there has been any wide spread of atheistic opinion. This is much more probable than the statement of the Archbishop of Toulouse, on a deputation to the king in 1775, that "le monstrueux athéisme est devenu l'opinion dominante" (Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI*, iii, 16; cited by Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 488, note). Joseph Droz, a monarchist and a Christian, writing under Louis Philippe, sums up that "the atheists formed only a small number of adepts" (*Histoire du Règne de Louis XVI*, éd. 1839, p. 42). And Rivarol, who at the time of writing his *Lettres à M. Necker* was substantially an atheist, says in so many words

<sup>1</sup> The book was accorded the Monthyon prize by the French Academy. In translation (1788) it found a welcome in England among Churchmen by reason of its pro-Christian tone and its general vindication of religious institutions. The translation was the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. See Kegan Paul's *William Godwin*, 1876, i, 193. Mrs. Dunlop, the friend of Burns, recommending its perusal to the poet, paid it a curious compliment: "He does not write like a sectary, hardly like a Christian, but yet while I read him, I like better my God, my neighbour, Monsieur Necker, and myself." *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> See Voltaire's letters to Madame Necker, *Corr. de Grimm*, ed. 1829, vii, 23, 118. Of the lady, Grimm writes (p. 118): "Hypathie Necker passe sa vie avec des systématiques, mais elle est dévote à sa manière. Elle voudrait être sincèrement hugenote, ou socinienne, ou déistiquie, ou plutôt, pour être quelque chose, elle prend le parti de ne se rendre compte sur rien." "Hypathie" was Voltaire's complimentary name for her.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Être Suprême*, 1892, pp. 17-19. M. Gazier (*Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la révolution française*, 1877, pp. 48, 173, 189 sq.) speaks somewhat loosely of a prevailing anti-Christian feeling when actually citing only isolated instances, and giving proofs of a general orthodoxy. Yet he points out the complete misconception of Thiers on the subject (p. 202).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Prof. W. M. Sloane, *The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, p. 43.



that, while Rousseau's "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" was naturally very attractive to many, such a book as the *Système de la Nature*, "were it as attractive as it is tedious, would win nobody" (*Œuvres*, éd. 1852, p. 134). Still, it ran into seven editions between 1770 and 1780.

Nor were there lacking vigorous representatives of orthodoxy: the powerful Abbé Grégoire, in particular, was a convinced Jansenist Christian, and at the same time an ardent democrat and anti-royalist.<sup>1</sup> He saw the immense importance to the Church of a good understanding with the Revolution, and he accepted the constitution of 1790. With him went a very large number of priests. M. Léonce de Lavergne, who was pious enough to write that "the philosophy of the eighteenth century had had the audacity to lay hands on God; and this impious attempt has had for punishment the revolutionary expiation," also admits that, "of the clergy, it was not the minority but the majority which went along with the Tiers État."<sup>2</sup> Many of the clergy, however, being refractory, the Assembly pressed its point, and the breach widened. It was solely through this *political* hostility on the part of the Church to the new constitution that any civic interference with public worship ever took place. Grégoire was extremely popular with the advanced types,<sup>3</sup> though his piety was conspicuous;<sup>4</sup> and there were not a few priests of his way of thinking,<sup>5</sup> among them being some of the ablest bishops.<sup>6</sup> On the flight of the king, he and they went with the democracy; and it was the obstinate refusal of the others to accept the constitution that provoked the new Legislative Assembly to coerce them. Though the new body was more anti-clerical than the old, however, it was simply doing what successive Protestant monarchs had done in England and Ireland; and probably no Government in the world would then have acted otherwise in a similar case.<sup>7</sup> Patience might perhaps have won the day; but the Revolution was fighting for its life; and the conservative Church, as all men knew, was eager to strangle it. Had the clergy left politics alone, or simply accepted the constitutional action of the State, there would have been no religious question. To speak of such a body of priests, who had at all times been eager to put men to death for heresy, as vindicating "liberty of conscience" when they refused fealty to the constitution,<sup>8</sup> is somewhat to strain the terms.

<sup>1</sup> Gazier, as cited, pp. 2, 4, 12, 19-21, 71, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Les Assemblées Provinciales sous Louis XVI*, 1864, pref. pp. viii-ix.

<sup>3</sup> Gazier, L. ii, ch. i. <sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 67. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 69. <sup>6</sup> Léonce de Lavergne, as cited.

<sup>7</sup> The authority of Turgot himself could be cited for the demand that the State clergy should accept the constitution of the State. Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison*, p. 12; Tissot, *Étude sur Turgot*, 1878, p. 160.

<sup>8</sup> Gazier, p. 113.

The expulsion of the Jesuits under the Old Régime had been a more coercive measure than the demand of the Assembly on the allegiance of the State clergy. And all the while the reactionary section of the priesthood was known to be conspiring with the royalists abroad. It was only when, in 1793, the conservative clergy were seen to be the great obstacle to the levy of an army of defence, that the more radical spirits began to think of interfering with their functions.<sup>1</sup>

(b) An *a priori* method has served alike in freethinkers' and in pietists' hands to obscure the facts. When Michelet insists on the "irreconcilable opposition of Christianity to the Revolution"—a thesis in which he was heartily supported by Proudhon<sup>2</sup>—he means that the central Christian dogmas of salvation by sacrifice and faith exclude any political ethic of justice<sup>3</sup>—any doctrine of equality and equity. But this is only to say that Christianity as an organization is in perpetual contradiction with some main part of its professed creed; and that has been a commonplace since Constantine. It does not mean that either Christians in multitudes or their churches as organizations have not constantly proceeded on ordinary political motives, whether populist or anti-populist. In Germany we have seen Lutheranism first fomenting and afterwards repudiating the movement of the peasants for betterment; and in England in the next century both parties in the civil war invoke religious doctrines, meeting texts with texts. Jansenism was in constant friction with the monarchy from its outset; and Louis XIV and Louis XV alike regarded the Jansenists as the enemies of the throne. "Christianity" could be as easily "reconciled" with a democratic movement in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as with the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in the sixteenth. If those Christians who still charge "the bloodshed of the French Revolution" on the spirit of incredulity desire to corroborate Michelet to the extent of making Christianity the bulwark of absolute monarchy, the friend of a cruel feudalism, and the guardian genius of the Bastille, they may be left to the criticism of their fellow-believers who have embraced the newer principle that the truth of the Christian religion is to be proved by connecting it in practice with the spirit of social reform. To point out to either party, as did Michelet, that *evangelical* Christianity is a religion of submission and preparation for the end of all things, and has nothing to do with rational political reform,

<sup>1</sup> Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, ed. 8vo 1868 and later, i, 16. Cp. Proudhon's *De la justice*, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> "Tout jugement religieux ou politique est une contradiction flagrante dans une religion uniquement fondée sur un dogme étranger à la justice." Ed. cited, introd. p. 60.



is to bestow logic where logic is indomiciliable. While rationalism undoubtedly fosters the critical spirit, professed Christians have during many ages shown themselves as prone to rebellion as to war, whether on religious or on political pretexts.

(c) For the rest, the legend falsifies what took place. The facts are now established by exact documentary research. The Government never substituted any species of religion for the Catholic.<sup>1</sup> The Festival of Reason at Nôtre Dame was an act not of the Convention but of the Commune of Paris and the Department; the Convention had no part in promoting it; half the members stayed away when invited to attend; and there was no Goddess of Reason in the ceremony, but only a Goddess of Liberty, represented by an actress who cannot even be identified.<sup>2</sup> Throughout, the devoutly theistic Rousseau was the chief literary hero of the movement. The two executive Committees in no way countenanced the dechristianization of the Churches, but on the contrary imprisoned persons who removed church properties; and these in turn protested that they had no thought of abolishing religion. The acts of irresponsible violence did not amount to a hundredth part of the "sacrilege" wrought in Protestant countries at the Reformation, and do not compare with the acts charged on Cromwell's troopers. The policy of inviting priests and bishops to abdicate their functions was strictly political; and the Archbishop Gobel did not abjure Catholicism, but only surrendered his office. That a number of priests did gratuitously abjure their religion is only a proof of what was well known—that a good many priests were simple deists. We have seen how many abbés fought in the freethought ranks, or near them. Diderot in a letter of 1769 tells of a day which he and a friend had passed with two monks who were atheists. "One of them read the first draft of a very fresh and very vigorous treatise on atheism, full of new and bold ideas; I learned with edification that this doctrine was the current doctrine of their cloisters. For the rest, these two monks were the 'big bonnets' of their monastery; they had intellect, gaiety, good feeling, knowledge."<sup>3</sup> And a priest of the cathedral of Auxerre, whose recollections went back to the revolutionary period, has confessed that at that time "philosophic"

<sup>1</sup> The grave misstatement of Michelet on this head is exposed by Aulard, *Culte*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Yet it is customary among Christians to speak of this lady in the most opprobrious terms. The royalist (but malcontent) Marquis de Villeneuve, who had seen the Revolution in his youth, claimed in his old age to have afterwards "conversed with the Goddess Reason of Paris and with the Goddess Reason of Bourges" (where he became governor); but, though he twice alludes to those women, he says nothing whatever against their characters (*De l'Agonie de la France*, 1835, i, 3, 19). Prof. W. M. Sloane, with all his religious prejudice, is satisfied that the women chosen as Goddesses of Reason outside of Paris were "noted for their spotless character." Work cited, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires*, ed. 1841, ii, 166.

opinions prevailed in most of the monasteries. His words even imply that in his opinion the unbelieving monks were the majority.<sup>1</sup> In the provinces, where the movement went on with various degrees of activity, it had the same general character. "Reason" itself was often identified with deity, or declared to be an emanation thereof. Hébert, commonly described as an atheist for his share in the movement, expressly denied the charge, and claimed to have exhorted the people to read the gospels and obey Christ.<sup>2</sup> Danton, though at his death he disavowed belief in immortality, had declared in the Convention in 1793 that "we have not striven to abolish superstition in order to establish the reign of atheism."<sup>3</sup> Even Chaumette was not an atheist;<sup>4</sup> and the Prussian Cloatz, who probably was, had certainly little or no doctrinary influence; while the two or three other professed atheists of the Assembly had no part in the public action.

(d) Finally, Robespierre was all along thoroughly hostile to the movement; in his character of Rousseauist and deist he argued that atheism was "aristocratic"; he put to death the leaders of the Cult of Reason; and he set up the Worship of the Supreme Being as a counter-move. Broadly speaking, he affiliated to Necker, and stood very much at the standpoint of the English Unitarianism of the present day. Thus the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror, if it is to be charged on any species of philosophic doctrine rather than on the unscrupulous policy of the enemies of the Revolution in and out of France, stands to the credit of the belief in a God, the creed of Frederick, Turgot, Necker, Franklin, Pitt, and Washington. The one convinced and reasoning atheist among the publicists of the Revolution, the journalist SALAVILLE,<sup>5</sup> opposed the Cult of Reason with sound and serious and persuasive argument, and strongly blamed all forcible interference with worship, while at the same time calmly maintaining atheism as against theism. The age of atheism had not come, any more than the triumph of Reason.

Mallet du Pan specifies, as among those who "since 1788 have pushed the blood-stained car of anarchy and atheism," Chamfort, Gronvelle, Garat, and Cerutti. Chamfort was as high-minded a man as Mallet himself, and is to-day so recognized by every unprejudiced reader. The others are forgotten.

<sup>1</sup> Père F.-J.-F. Fortin, *Souvenirs*, Auxerre, 1867, ii, 41.

<sup>2</sup> See the speech in Aulard, *Culte*, p. 240; and cp. pp. 79-85.

<sup>3</sup> "Le peuple aura des fêtes dans lesquelles il offrira de l'encens à l'Être Suprême, au maître de la nature, car nous n'avons pas voulu anéantir la superstition pour établir le règne de l'athéisme." Speech of Nov. 26, 1793, in the *Moniteur*. (*Discours de Danton*, ed. André Fribourg, 1910, p. 599.)

<sup>4</sup> Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning whom see Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 86-96.



Gronvelle, who as secretary of the executive council read to Louis XVI his death-sentence, wrote *De l'autorité de Montesquieu dans la révolution présente* (1789). Garat was Minister of Justice in 1792 and of the Interior in 1793, and was ennobled by Napoleon. He had published *Considérations sur la Révolution* (1792) and a *Mémoire sur la Révolution* (1795). Cerutti, originally a Jesuit, became a member of the Legislative Assembly, and was the friend of Mirabeau, whose funeral oration he delivered.

28. The anti-atheistic and anti-philosophic legend was born of the exasperation and bad faith of the dethroned aristocracy, themselves often unbelievers in the day of their ascendancy, and, whether unbelievers or not, responsible with the Church and the court for that long insensate resistance to reform which made the revolution inevitable. Mere random denunciation of new ideas as tending to generate rebellion was of course an ancient commonplace. Medieval heretics had been so denounced; Wiclif was in his day; and when the Count de Cataneo attacked Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, he spoke of all such reasonings as "attempts which shake the sacred basis of thrones."<sup>1</sup> But he and his contemporaries knew that freethinkers were not specially given to mutiny; and when, later, French Churchmen had begun systematically to accuse the philosophers of undermining alike the Church and the throne,<sup>2</sup> the unbelieving nobles, conscious of entire political conservatism, had simply laughed. Better than anyone else they knew that political revolt had other roots and motives than incredulity; and they could not but remember how many French kings had been rebelled against by the Church, and how many slain by priestly hands. Their acceptance of the priestly formula came later. In the life of the brilliant Rivarol, who associated with the noblesse while disdained by many of them because of his obscure birth, we may read the intellectual history of the case. Brilliant without patience, keen without scientific coherence,<sup>3</sup> Rivarol in 1787 met the pious deism of Necker with a dialectic in which cynicism as often disorders as illuminates the argument. With prompt veracity he first rejects the

<sup>1</sup> *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*, Eng. tr. 1753, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., in the Arrêt du Parlement of 9 juin, 1762, denouncing Rousseau's *Émile* as tending to make the royal authority odious and to destroy the principle of obedience; and in the *Examen du Bélisaire de M. Marmontel*, by Coger (Nouv. éd. augm. 1767, p. 45 sq. Cp. Marmontel's *Mémoires*, 1804, iii, 46, as to his being called *ennemi du trône et de l'autel*). This kind of invective was kept up against the *philosophes* to the moment of the Revolution. See for instance *Le vrai religieux*, Discours dédié à Madame Louise de France, par le R. P. C. A. 1787, p. 4: "Une philosophie orgueilleuse a renversé les limites sacrées que la main du Très-Haut avoit elle-même élevées. La raison de l'homme a osé sonder les décrets de Dieu..... Dans les accès de son ivresse, n'a-t-elle pas sapé les fondemens du trône et des lois," etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the admissions of Curnier (*Rivarol, sa vie et ses œuvres*, 1858, p. 149) in deprecation of Burke's wild likening of Rivarol's journalism to the Annals of Tacitus.

ideal of a beneficent reign of delusion, and insists that religion is seen in all history powerless alike to overrule men's passions and prejudices, and to console the oppressed by its promise of a reversal of earthly conditions in another world. But in the same breath, by way of proving that the atheist is less disturbing to convention than the deist, he insists that the unbeliever soon learns to see that "irreverences are crimes against society"; and then, in order to justify such conformity, asserts what he had before denied. And the self-contradiction recurs.<sup>1</sup> The underlying motive of the whole polemic is simply the grudge of the upper class diner-out against the serious and conscientious *bourgeois* who strives to reform the existing system. Conscious of being more enlightened, the wit is eager at once to disparage Necker for his religiosity and to discredit him politically as the enemy of the socially useful ecclesiastical order. Yet in his second letter *Sur la morale* (1788) he is so plainly an unbeliever that the treatise had to be printed at Berlin. The due sequence is that when the Revolution breaks out Rivarol sides with the court and the noblesse, while perfectly aware of the ineptitude and malfeasance of both;<sup>2</sup> and, living in exile, proceeds to denounce the philosophers as having caused the overturn by their universal criticism. In 1787 he had declared that he would not even have written his Letters to Necker if he were not certain that "the people does not read." Then the people had read neither the philosophers nor him. But in exile he must needs frame for the *émigrés* a formula, true or false. It is the falsity of men divided against themselves, who pay themselves with recriminations rather than realize their own deserts.<sup>3</sup> And in the end Rivarol is but a deist.

29. If any careful attempt be made to analyse the situation, the stirring example of the precedent revolution in the British American colonies will probably be recognized as counting for very much more than any merely literary influence in promoting that of France. A certain "republican" spirit had indeed existed among educated men in France throughout the reign of Louis XV: D'Argenson noted it in 1750 and later.<sup>4</sup> But this spirit, which D'Argenson in large measure shared, while holding firmly by monarchy,<sup>5</sup> was simply the spirit of *constitutionalism*, the love of law and good government, and it derived

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres*, ed. cited, pp. 136-40, 147-55.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the critique of Sainte-Beuve, prefixed to ed. cited, pp. 14-17, and that of Arsène Houssaye, *id.* pp. 31-33. Mr. Saintsbury, though biassed to the side of the royalist, admits that "Rivarol hardly knows what sincerity is" (*Miscellaneous Essays*, 1892, p. 67).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Comte is thus partly inaccurate in saying (*Traité de Législation*, 1835, i, 72) that the charge against the philosophers began "on the day on which there was set up a government in France that sought to re-establish the abuses of which they had sought the destruction." What is true is that the charge, framed at once by the backers of the Old Régime, has always since done duty for reaction.

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iii, 313; iv, 70; v, 346, 348.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* iii, 346-47.



from English example and the teachings of such Englishmen as Locke,<sup>1</sup> insofar as it was not spontaneous. If acceptance of the doctrine of constitutional government can lead to anarchy, let it be avowed; but let not the cause be pretended to be deism or atheism. The political teaching for which the Paris Parlement denounced Rousseau's *Émile* in 1762, and for which the theologians of the Sorbonne censured Marmontel's *Bélisaire* in 1767, was the old doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. But this had been maintained by a whole school of English Protestant Christians before Bossuet denounced the Protestant Jurieu for maintaining it. Nay, it had been repeatedly maintained by Catholic theologians, from Thomas Aquinas to Suarez,<sup>2</sup> especially when there was any question of putting down a Protestant monarch. Protestants on their part protested indignantly, and reciprocated. The recriminations of Protestants and Catholics on this head form one of the standing farces of human history. Coger, attacking Marmontel, unctuously cites Bayle's censure of his fellow Protestants in his *Avis aux Réfugiés*<sup>3</sup> for their tone towards kings and monarchy, but says nothing of Bayle's quarrel with Jurieu, which motivated such an utterance, or of his *Critique Générale* of Maimbourg's *Histoire du Calvinisme*, in which he shows how the Catholic historian's principles would justify the rebellion alike of Catholics in every Protestant country and of Protestants in every Catholic country,<sup>4</sup> though all the while it is assumed that true Christians never resort to violence. And, unless there has been an error as to his authorship, Bayle himself, be it remembered, had in his letter *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand* passed as scathing a criticism on Louis XIV as any Protestant refugee could well have compassed. Sectarian hypocrisies apart, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people—for opposing which the freethinker Hobbes has been execrated by generations of Christians—is the professed political creed of the very classes who, in England and the United States, have so long denounced French freethinkers for an alleged "subversive" social teaching which fell far short of what English and American Protestants had actually practised. The revolt of the American colonies, in fact, precipitated demo-

<sup>1</sup> D'Argenson, noting in his old age how "on n'a jamais autant parlé de nation et d'État qu'aujourd'hui," how no such talk had been heard under Louis XIV, and how he himself had developed on the subject, adds, "cela vient du parlement et des Anglois." He goes on to speak of a reissue of the translation of Locke on Civil Government, originally made by the Jansenists (*Mémoires*, iv, 189-90).

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, iii, 160-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Œuvres diverses de Pierre Bayle*, La Haye, 4 vols. fol. 1737, ii, 564 sq.

<sup>4</sup> This *Critique* appears in the very volume to which Coger refers for the *Avis aux Réfugiés*. See Lett. viii, xiii, xvii, etc., vol. and ed. cited, pp. 36, 54, 71, etc.

cratic feeling in France in a way that no writing had ever done. Lafayette, no freethinker, declared himself republican at once on reading the American declaration of the Rights of Man.<sup>1</sup> In all this the freethinking propaganda counted for nothing directly and for little indirectly, inasmuch as there was no clerical quarrel in the colonies. And if we seek for even an indirect or general influence, apart from the affirmation of the duty of kings to their people, the thesis as to the activity of the *philosophes* must at once be restricted to the cases of Rousseau, Helvétius, Raynal, and d'Holbach, for Marmontel never passed beyond "sound" generalities.

As for the pretence that it was freethinking doctrines that brought Louis XVI to the scaffold, it is either the most impudent or the most ignorant of historical imputations. The "right" of tyrannicide had been maintained by Catholic schoolmen before the Reformation, and by both Protestants and Catholics afterwards, times without number, even as they maintained the right of the people to depose and change kings. The doctrine was in fact not even a modern innovation, the theory being so well primed by the practice—under every sort of government, Jewish and pagan in antiquity, Moslem in the Middle Ages, and Christian from the day of Pepin to the day of John Knox—that a certain novelty lay on the side of the "divine right of kings" when that was popularly formulated. And on the whole question of revolution, or the right of peoples to recast their laws, the general doctrine of the most advanced of the French freethinkers is paralleled or outgone by popes and Church Councils in the Middle Ages, by Occam and Marsiglio of Padua and Wiclif and more than one German legist in the fourteenth century, by John Major and George Buchanan in Scotland, by Goodman in England, and by many Huguenots in France, in the sixteenth; by Hotman in his *Francogallia* in 1574; by the author of the *Soupirs de la France Esclave*<sup>2</sup> in 1689; and by the whole propagandist literature of the English and American Revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth. So far from being a specialty of freethinkers, "sedition" was in all these and other cases habitually grounded on Biblical texts and religious protestations; so that Bacon, little given as he was to defending rationalists, could confidently avow that "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation.....but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore atheism did never perturb states....."

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the survey of Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la rév. française*, 2e édit. 1903, pp. 2-23.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the work of a Jansenist.



But superstition hath been the confusion of many states." For "superstition" read "sectarianism," "fanaticism," and "ecclesiasticism." Bacon's generalization is of course merely empirical, atheism being capable of alliance with revolutionary passion in its turn; but the historical summary holds good. Only by men who had not read or had forgotten universal history could the ascription of the French Revolution to rationalistic thought have been made.<sup>1</sup>

30. A survey of the work and attitude of the leading French freethinkers of the century may serve to settle the point once for all. Voltaire is admittedly out of the question. Mallet du Pan, whose resistance to the Revolution developed into a fanaticism hardly less perturbing to judgment<sup>2</sup> than that of Burke, expressly disparaged him as having so repelled men by his cynicism that he had little influence on their feelings, and so could not be reckoned a prime force in preparing the Revolution.<sup>3</sup> "Mably," the critic adds, "whose republican declamations have intoxicated many modern democrats, was religious to austerity: at the first stroke of the tocsin against the Church of Rome, he would have thrown his books in the fire, excepting his scathing apostrophes to Voltaire and the atheists. Marmontel, Saint-Lambert, Morellet, Encyclopedists, were adversaries of the revolution."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Barante avows that Mably, detesting as he did the freethinking philosophers of his day, followed no less than others "a destructive course, and contributed, without knowing it, to weaken the already frayed ties which still united the parts of an ancient society."<sup>5</sup> As Barante had previously ascribed the whole dissolution to the autocratic process under Louis XIV,<sup>6</sup> even this indictment of the orthodox Mably is invalid. Voltaire, on the other hand, Barante charges with an undue leaning to the methods of Louis XIV. Voltaire, in fact, was in things political a conservative, save insofar as he fought for toleration, for lenity, and for the most necessary

<sup>1</sup> On the whole question of the growth of abstract revolutionary doctrine in politics cp. W. S. McKechnie on the *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* in the "George Buchanan" vol. of Glasgow Quatercentenary Studies, 1906, pp. 256-76; Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, Maitland's tr. 1900, p. 37 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Mallet actually reproaches the *philosophes* in the mass—while admitting the hostility of many of them to the Revolution—with "having accelerated French degeneration and depravation.....by rendering the conscience argumentative (*raisonneuse*), by substituting for duties inculcated by sentiment, tradition, and habit, the uncertain rules of the human reason and sophisms adapted to passions," etc., etc. (B. Mallet, as cited, p. 360). With all his natural vigour of mind, Mallet du Pan thus came to talk the language of the ordinary irrationalist of the Reaction. Certainly, if the stimulation of the habit of reasoning be a destructive course, the *philosophes* stand condemned. But as Christians had been reasoning as best they could, in an eternal series of vain disputes, for a millennium and a-half before the Revolution, with habitual appeal to the passions, the argument only proves how vacuous a Christian champion's reasoning can be.

<sup>3</sup> Art. in *Mercure Britannique*, No. 13, Feb. 21, 1799; cited by B. Mallet in *Mallet du Pan and the French Revolution*, 1902, App. p. 357.

<sup>4</sup> *Tableau littéraire du dix-huitième siècle*, 8e édit. pp. 112, 113.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 359.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 72.

reforms. And if Voltaire's attack on what he held to be a demoralizing and knew to be a persecuting religion be saddled with the causation of the political crash, the blame will have to be carried back equally to the English deists and the tyranny of Louis XIV. To such indictments, as Barante protests, there is no limit: every age pivots on its predecessor; and to blame for the French Revolution everybody but a corrupt aristocracy, a tyrannous and ruinously spendthrift monarchy, and a cruel church, is to miss the last semblance of judicial method. It may be conceded that the works of Meslier and d'Holbach, neither of whom is noticed by Barante, are directly though only generally revolutionary in their bearing. But the main works of d'Holbach appeared too close upon the Revolution to be credited with generating it; and Meslier, as we know, had been generally read only in abridgments and adaptations, in which his political doctrine disappears.

Mallet du Pan, striking in all directions, indicts alternately Rousseau, whose vogue lay largely among religious people, and the downright freethinkers. The great fomentor of the Revolution, the critic avows, was Rousseau. "He had a hundred times more readers than Voltaire in the middle and lower classes.....No one has more openly attacked the right of property in declaring it a usurpation.....It is he alone who has inoculated the French with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and with its most extreme consequences."<sup>1</sup> After this "he alone," the critic obviously proceeds to exclaim: "Diderot and Condorcet: there are the true chiefs of the revolutionary school," adding that Diderot had "proclaimed equality before Marat; the Rights of Man before Siéyès; sacred insurrection before Mirabeau and Lafayette; the massacre of priests before the Septembrists."<sup>2</sup> But this is mere furious declamation. Only by heedless misreading or malice can support be given to the pretence that Diderot wrought for the violent overthrow of the existing political system. Passages denouncing kingly tyranny had been inserted in their plays by both Corneille and Voltaire, and applauded by audiences who never dreamt of abolishing monarchy. A phrase about strangling kings in the bowels of priests is expressly put by Diderot in the mouth of an *Éleuthéromane* or Liberty-maniac;<sup>3</sup> which shows that the type had arisen in his lifetime in opposition to his own bias. This very poem he read to

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, p. 407. Lord Morley points to the phrase in another form in a letter of Voltaire's in 1761. It really derives from Jean Meslier, who quotes it from an unlettered man (*Testament*, i, 19).



the Prince von Galitzin, the ambassador of the Empress Catherine and his own esteemed friend.<sup>1</sup> The tyranny of the French Government, swayed by the king's mistresses and favourites and by the Jesuits, he did indeed detest, as he had cause to do, and as every man of good feeling did with him; but no writing of his wrought measurably for its violent overthrow.<sup>2</sup> D'Argenson in 1751 was expressing his fears of a revolution, and noting the "désobeissance constante" of the Parlement of Paris and the disaffection of the people, before he had heard of "un M. Diderot, qui a beaucoup d'esprit, mais qui affecte trop l'irreligion." And when he notes that the Jesuits have secured the suppression of the *Encyclopédie* as being hostile "to God and the royal authority," he does not attach the slightest weight to the charge. He knew that Louis called the pious Jansenists "enemies of God and of the king."<sup>3</sup>

Mallet du Pan grounds his charge against Diderot almost solely on "those incendiary diatribes intercalated in the *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* which dishonour that work, and which Raynal, in his latter days, excised with horror from a new edition which he was preparing." But supposing the passages in question to be all Diderot's<sup>4</sup>—which is far from certain—they are to be saddled with responsibility for the Reign of Terror only on the principle that it was more provocative in the days of tyranny to denounce than to exercise it. To this complexion Mallet du Pan came, with the anti-Revolutionists in general; but to-day we can recognize in the whole process of reasoning a *reductio ad absurdum*. The school in question came in all seriousness to ascribe the evils of the Revolution to everything and everybody save the men and classes whose misgovernment made the Revolution inevitable.

Some of the philosophers, it is true, themselves gave colour to the view that they were the makers of the Revolution, as when D'Alembert said to Romilly that "philosophy" had produced in his time that change in the popular mind which exhibited itself in the indifference with which they received the news of the birth of the dauphin.<sup>5</sup> The error is none the less plain. The *philosophes* had done nothing to promote anti-monarchism among the common people, who did not read.<sup>6</sup> It was the whole political and social

<sup>1</sup> Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 380-81.

<sup>2</sup> As Lord Morley points out, Henri Martin absolutely reverses the purport of a passage in order to convict Diderot of justifying regicide.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 44, 51, 68, 69, 74, 91, 93, 101, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Mallet du Pan says he saw the MS., and knew Diderot to have received 10,000 *livres* *tournois* for his additions. This statement is incredible. But Meister is explicit, in his *éloge*, as to Diderot having written for the book much that he thought nobody would sign, whereas Raynal was ready to sign anything.

<sup>5</sup> *Mémoires of Sir Samuel Romilly*, 3rd ed. 1841, i, 46.

<sup>6</sup> When D'Argenson writes in 1752 (*Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 103) that he hears "only

evolution of two generations that had wrought the change; and the people were still for the most part believing Catholics. Frederick the Great was probably within the mark when in 1769 he privately reminded the more optimistic philosophers that their entire French public did not number above 200,000 persons. The people of Paris, who played the chief part in precipitating the Revolution, were spontaneously mutinous and disorderly, but were certainly not in any considerable number unbelievers. "While Voltaire dechristianized a portion of polite society the people remained very pious, even at Paris. In 1766 Louis XV, so unpopular, was acclaimed because he knelt, on the Pont Neuf, before the Holy Sacrament."<sup>1</sup>

And this is the final answer to any pretence that the Revolution was the work of the school of d'Holbach. Bergier the priest, and Rivarol the conservative unbeliever, alike denied that d'Holbach's systematic writings had any wide public. Doubtless the same men were ready to eat their words for the satisfaction of vilifying an opponent. It has always been the way of orthodoxy to tell atheists alternately that they are an impotent handful and that they are the ruin of society. But by this time it ought to be a matter of elementary knowledge that a great political revolution can be wrought only by far-reaching political forces, whether or not these may concur with a propaganda of rationalism in religion.<sup>2</sup> If any "philosopher" so-called is to be credited with specially promoting the Revolution, it is either Rousseau, who is so often hailed latterly as the engineer of a religious reaction, and whose works, as has been repeatedly remarked, "contain much that is utterly and irreconcilably opposed" to the Revolution,<sup>3</sup> or Raynal, who was only anti-clerical, not anti-Christian, and who actually censured the revolutionary procedure. When he published his first edition he must be held to have acquiesced in its doctrine, whether it were from Diderot's pen or his own. Rousseau and Raynal were the two most popular writers of their day who dealt with social as apart from religious or philosophical issues, and to both is thus imputed a general subversiveness. But here too the charge rests upon a sociological fallacy. The Parlement of Paris, composed of rich bourgeois and aristocrats, many of them Jansenists, very few

*philosophes* say, as if convinced, that even anarchy would be better" than the existing misgovernment, he makes no suggestion that they teach this. And he declares for his own part that everything is drifting to ruin: "nulle réformation.....nulle amélioration. ....Tout tombe, par lambeaux."

<sup>1</sup> Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la rév.*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> This is the sufficient comment on a perplexing page of Lord Morley's second monograph on Burke (pp. 110-11), which I have never been able to reconcile with the rest of his writing.

<sup>3</sup> Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Century*, small ed. vi, 263.



of them freethinkers, most of them ready to burn freethinking books, played a "subversive" part throughout the century, inasmuch as it so frequently resisted the king's will.<sup>1</sup> The stars in their courses fought against the old despotism. Rousseau was ultimately influential towards change because change was inevitable and essential, not because he was restless. The whole drift of things furthered his ideas, which at the outset won no great vogue. He was followed because he set forth what so many felt; and similarly Raynal was read because he chimed with a strengthening feeling. In direct contradiction to Mallet du Pan, Chamfort, a keener observer, wrote while the Revolution was still in action that "the priesthood was the first bulwark of absolute power, and Voltaire overthrew it. Without this decisive and indispensable first step nothing would have been done."<sup>2</sup> The same observer goes on to say that Rousseau's political works, and particularly the *Contrat Social*, "were fitted for few readers, and caused no alarm at court.....That theory was regarded as a hollow speculation which could have no further consequences than the enthusiasm for liberty and the contempt of royalty carried so far in the pieces of Corneille, and applauded at court by the most absolute of kings, Louis XIV. All that seemed to belong to another world, and to have no connection with ours; .....in a word, Voltaire above all has made the Revolution, because he has written for all; Rousseau above all has made the Constitution because he has written for the thinkers."<sup>3</sup> And so the changes may be rung for ever. The final philosophy of history cannot be reached by any such artificial selection of factors;<sup>4</sup> and the ethical problem equally evades such solutions. If we are to pass any ethico-political judgment whatever, it must be that the evils of the Revolution lie at the door not of the reformers, but of the men, the classes, and the institutions which first provoked and then resisted it.<sup>5</sup> To describe the former as the authors of the process is as intelligent as it was to charge upon Sokrates the decay of orthodox tradition in Athens, and to charge upon that the later downfall of the Athenian empire. The wisest men of the age, notably the great Turgot, sought a gradual transformation, a peaceful and harmless transition from unconstitutional to constitutional government.

<sup>1</sup> D'Argenson notes this repeatedly, though in one passage he praises the Parlement as having alone made head against absolutism (déc. 1752; ed. cited, iv, 116).

<sup>2</sup> *Maximes et Pensées*, ed. 1856, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 73-74.

<sup>4</sup> Chamfort in another passage maintains against Soultavie that the Academy did much to develop the spirit of freedom in thought and politics. *Id.* p. 107. And this too is arguable, as we have seen.

<sup>5</sup> On this complicated issue, which cannot be here handled at any further length, see Prof. P. A. Wadia's essay *The Philosophers and the French Revolution* (Social Science Series, 1904), which, however, needs revision; and compare the argument of Nourrisson, *J.-J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, ch. xx.

Their policy was furiously resisted by an unteachable aristocracy. When at last fortuitous violence made a breach in the feudal walls, a people unprepared for self-rule, and fought by an aristocracy eager for blood, surged into anarchy, and convulsion followed on convulsion. That is in brief the history of the Revolution.

31. While the true causation of the Revolution is thus kept clear, it must not be forgotten, further, that to the very last, save where controlled by disguised rationalists like Malesherbes, the tendency of the old régime was to persecute brutally and senselessly wherever it could lay hands on a freethinker. In 1788, only a year before the first explosion of the Revolution, there appeared the *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens* of SYLVAIN MARÉCHAL, a work of which the offence consisted not in any attack upon religion, but in simply constructing a calendar in which the names of renowned laymen were substituted for saints. Instantly it was denounced by the Paris Parlement, the printer prosecuted, and the author imprisoned; and De Sauvigny, the censor who had passed the book, was exiled thirty leagues from Paris.<sup>1</sup>

Some idea of the intensity of the tyranny over all literature in France under the Old Régime may be gathered from Buckle's compendious account of the books officially condemned, and of authors punished, during the two generations before the Revolution. Apart from the record of the treatment of Buffon, Marmontel, Morellet, Voltaire, and Diderot, it runs: "The..... tendency was shown in matters so trifling that nothing but the gravity of their ultimate results prevents them from being ridiculous. In 1770, Imbert translated Clarke's *Letters on Spain*, one of the best works then existing on that country. This book, however, was suppressed as soon as it appeared; and the only reason assigned for such a stretch of power is that it contained some remarks respecting the passion of Charles III for hunting, which were considered disrespectful to the French crown, because Louis XV himself was a great hunter. Several years before this La Bletterie, who was favourably known in France by his works, was elected a member of the French Academy. But he, it seems, was a Jansenist, and had moreover ventured to assert that the Emperor Julian, notwithstanding his apostasy, was not entirely devoid of good qualities. Such offences could not be overlooked in so pure an age; and the king obliged the Academy to exclude La Bletterie from their society. That the punishment extended no further was an instance of remarkable leniency; for Fréret, an eminent critic and scholar, was confined in the Bastille because he stated,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. cited, xiv, 5-6. Lettre de janv. 1788.



in one of his memoirs, that the earliest Frankish chiefs had received their titles from the Romans. The same penalty was inflicted four different times upon Lenglet du Fresnoy. In the case of this amiable and accomplished man, there seems to have been hardly the shadow of a pretext for the cruelty with which he was treated; though on one occasion the alleged offence was that he had published a supplement to the History of De Thou.

"Indeed, we have only to open the biographies and correspondence of that time to find instances crowding upon us from all quarters. Rousseau was threatened with imprisonment, was driven from France, and his works were publicly burned. The celebrated treatise of Helvétius on the Mind was suppressed by an order of the Royal Council; it was burned by the common hangman, and the author was compelled to write two letters retracting his opinions. Some of the geological views of Buffon having offended the clergy, that illustrious naturalist was obliged to publish a formal recantation of doctrines which are now known to be perfectly accurate. The learned *Observations on the History of France*, by Mably, were suppressed as soon as they appeared: for what reason it would be hard to say, since M. Guizot, certainly no friend either to anarchy or to irreligion, has thought it worth while to republish them, and thus stamp them with the authority of his own great name. *The History of the Indies*, by Raynal, was condemned to the flames, and the author ordered to be arrested. Lanjuinais, in his well-known work on Joseph II, advocated not only religious toleration, but even the abolition of slavery; his book, therefore, was declared to be 'seditious'; it was pronounced 'destructive of all subordination,' and was sentenced to be burned. *The Analysis of Bayle*, by Marsy, was suppressed, and the author was imprisoned. *The History of the Jesuits*, by Linguet, was delivered to the flames; eight years later his journal was suppressed; and, three years after that, as he still persisted in writing, his *Political Annals* were suppressed, and he himself was thrown into the Bastille. Delisle de Sales was sentenced to perpetual exile and confiscation of all his property on account of his work on the *Philosophy of Nature*. The treatise by Mey, on French Law, was suppressed; that by Boncerf, on Feudal Law, was burned. *The Memoirs of Beaumarchais* were likewise burned. Duvernet, having written a *History of the Sorbonne*, which was still unpublished, was seized and thrown into the Bastille, while the manuscript was yet in his own possession. The celebrated work of De Lolme on the English constitution was suppressed by edict directly it appeared. The fate of being suppressed or prohibited also awaited the Letters of Gervaise in 1724; the Dissertations of Courayer in 1727; the Letters of Montgon in 1732; the *History of Tamerlane*, by Margat, also in 1732; the

*Essay on Taste*, by Cartaud, in 1736; *The Life of Domat*, by Prévost de la Jannès, in 1742; the *History of Louis XI*, by Duclos, in 1745; the Letters of Bargeton in 1750; the *Memoirs on Troyes*, by Grosley, in the same year; the *History of Clement XI*, by Reboulet, in 1752; *The School of Man*, by Génard, also in 1752; the *Therapeutics* of Garlon in 1756; the celebrated thesis of Louis, on *Generation*, in 1754; the treatise on *Presidial Jurisdiction*, by Jousse, in 1755; the *Éricie* of Fontenelle in 1768; the *Thoughts of Jamin* in 1769; the *History of Siam*, by Turpin, and the *Éloge of Marcus Aurelius*, by Thomas, both in 1770; the works on Finance by Darigrand, in 1764, and by Le Trosne in 1779; the *Essay on Military Tactics*, by Guibert, in 1772; the Letters of Boucquet in the same year; and the *Memoirs of Terrai*, by Coquereau, in 1776. Such wanton destruction of property was, however, mercy itself compared to the treatment experienced by other literary men in France. Desforges, for example, having written against the arrest of the Pretender to the English throne, was, solely on that account, buried in a dungeon eight feet square and confined there for three years. This happened in 1749; and in 1770, Audra, professor at the College of Toulouse, and a man of some reputation, published the first volume of his *Abridgement of General History*. Beyond this the work never proceeded; it was at once condemned by the archbishop of the diocese, and the author was deprived of his office. Audra, held up to public opprobrium, the whole of his labours rendered useless, and the prospects of his life suddenly blighted, was unable to survive the shock. He was struck with apoplexy, and within twenty-four hours was lying a corpse in his own house."

32. Among many other illustrations of the passion for persecution in the period may be noted the fact that after the death of the atheist Damiaville his enemies contrived to deprive his brother of a post from which he had his sole livelihood.<sup>1</sup> It is but one of an infinity of proofs that the spirit of sheer sectarian malevolence, which is far from being eliminated in modern life, was in the French Church of the eighteenth century the ruling passion. Lovers of moderate courses there were, even in the Church; but even among professors of lenity we find an ingrained belief in the virtue of vituperation and coercion. And it is not until the persecuted minority has developed its power of written retaliation, and the deadly arrows of Voltaire have aroused in the minds of persecutors a new terror, that there seems to arise on that side a suspicion that there can be any better way of handling unbelief than by invective and imprisonment. After they had taught the heretics to defend themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.



found them possessed of weapons such as orthodoxy could not hope to handle, we find Churchmen talking newly of the duty of gentleness towards error; and even then clinging to the last to the weapons of public ostracism and aspersion. So the fight was of necessity fought on the side of freethought in the temper of men warring on incorrigible oppression and cruelty as well as on error. The wonder is that the freethinkers preserved so much amenity.

33. This section would not be complete even in outline without some notice of the attitude held towards religion by Napoleon, who at once crowned and in large measure undid the work of the Revolution. He has his place in its religious legend in the current datum that he wrought for the faith by restoring a suppressed public worship and enabling the people of France once more to hear church-bells. In point of fact, as was pointed out by Bishop Grégoire in 1826, "it is materially proved that in 1796, before he was Consul, and four years before the Concordat, according to a statement drawn up at the office of the Domaines Nationaux, there were in France 32,214 parishes where the culte was carried on."<sup>1</sup> Other commonplaces concerning Napoleon are not much better founded. On the strength of a number of oral utterances, many of them imperfectly vouched for, and none of them marked by much deliberation, he has been claimed by Carlyle<sup>2</sup> as a theist who philosophically disdained the "clatter of materialism," and believed in a Personal Creator of an infinite universe; while by others he is put forward as a kind of expert in character study who vouched for the divinity of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> In effect, his verdict that "this was not a man" would tell, if anything, in favour of the view that Jesus is a mythical construction. He was, indeed, by temperament quasi-religious, liking the sound of church bells and the atmosphere of devotion; and in his boyhood he had been a rather fervent Catholic. As he grew up he read, like his contemporaries, the French deists of his time, and became a deist like his fellows, recognizing that religions were human productions. Declaring that he was "loin d'être athée," he propounded to O'Meara all the conventional views—that religion should be made a support to morals and law; that men need to believe in marvels; that religion is a great consolation to those who believe in it; and that "no one

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire du mariage des prêtres en France*, par. M. Grégoire, ancien évêque de Blois, 1826, p. v. Compare the details in the *Appendice* to the *Etudes* of M. Gazier, before cited. That writer's account is the more decisive seeing that his bias is clerical, and that, writing before M. Aulard, he had to a considerable extent retained the old illusion as to the "decreeing of atheism" by the Convention (p. 313). See pp. 230-260 as to the readjustment effected by Grégoire, while the conservative clergy were still striving to undo the Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> *Heroes and Hero-Worship: Napoleon*.  
<sup>3</sup> See the *Sentiments de Napoléon sur le Christianisme: conversations recueillies à Sainte-Hélène par le Comte de Montholon*, 1841. Many of the utterances here set forth are irreconcilable with Napoleon's general tone.

can tell what he will do in his last moments."<sup>1</sup> The opinion to which he seems to have adhered most steadily was that every man should die in the religion in which he had been brought up. And he himself officially did so, though he put off almost to the last the formality of a deathbed profession. His language on the subject is irreconcilable with any real belief in the Christian religion: he was "a deist à la Voltaire who recalled with tenderness his Catholic childhood, and who at death reverted to his first beliefs."<sup>2</sup> For the rest, he certainly believed in religion as a part of the machinery of the State, and repeated the usual platitudes about its value as a moral restraint. He was candid enough, however, not to pretend that it had ever restrained him; and no freethinker condemned more sweepingly than he the paralyzing effect of the Catholic system on Spain.<sup>3</sup> To the Church his attitude was purely political; and his personal liking for the Pope never moved him to yield, where he could avoid it, to the temporal pretensions of the papacy. The Concordat of 1802, that "brilliant triumph over the genius of the Revolution,"<sup>4</sup> was purely and simply a political measure. If he had had his way, he would have set up a system of religious councils in France, to be utilized against all disturbing tendencies in politics.<sup>5</sup> Had he succeeded, he was capable of suppressing all manifestations of freethought in the interests of "order."<sup>6</sup> He had, in fact, no disinterested love of truth; and we have his express declaration, at St. Helena, on the subject of Molière's *Tartufe*: "I do not hesitate to say that if the piece had been written in my time, I would not have permitted its representation."<sup>7</sup> Freethought can make no warm claim to the allegiance of such a ruler; and if the Church of Rome is concerned to claim him as a son on the score of his deathbed adherence, after a reign which led the Catholic clergy of Spain to hold him up to the faithful as an incarnation of the devil,<sup>8</sup> she will hardly gain by the association. Napoleon's ideas on religious questions were in fact no more noteworthy than his views on economics, which were thoroughly conventional.

<sup>1</sup> O'Meara, *Napoléon en Exil*, ed. Lacroix, 1897, ii, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ph. Gonnard, *Les origines de la légende Napoléonienne*, 1906, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Pasquier, cited by Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, ed. 1913, i, 282. The Concordat was bitterly resented by the freethinkers in the army. *Id.* p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> See Jules Barni's *Napoléon Ier*, ed. 1870, p. 83, as to the amazing Catechism imposed by Napoleon on France in 1811. For the history of its preparation and imposition see De Labone, *Paris sous Napoléon: La Religion*, 1907, p. 100 sq.

<sup>6</sup> As to the Napoleonic censorship of literature, cp. Madame de Staël, *Considérations sur la révolution française*, ptie. iv, ch. 16; *Dix Années d'Exil*, préf.; Welschinger, *La Censure sous le premier Empire*, 1882.

<sup>7</sup> Las Cases, *Mémoires de Sainte-Hélène*, 19 août, 1816.

<sup>8</sup> Mignet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, 4e édit. ii, 340.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### GERMAN FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

1. WHEN two generations of Protestant strife had turned to naught the intellectual promise of the Reformation, and much of the ground first won by it had lapsed to Catholicism, the general forward movement of European thought availed to set up in Germany as elsewhere a measure of critical unbelief. There is abundant evidence that the Lutheran clergy not only failed to hold the best intelligence of the country with them, but in large part fell into personal disrepute.<sup>1</sup> "The scenes of clerical immorality," says an eminently orthodox historian, "are enough to chill one's blood even at the distance of two centuries."<sup>2</sup> A Church Ordinance of 1600 acknowledges information to the effect that a number of clergymen and schoolmasters are guilty of "whoredom and fornication," and commands that "if they are notoriously guilty they shall be suspended." Details are preserved of cases of clerical drunkenness and ruffianism; and the women of the priests' families do not escape the pillory.<sup>3</sup> Nearly a century later, Arnold resigned his professorship at Giessen "from despair of producing any amendment in the dissolute habits of the students."<sup>4</sup> It is noted that "the great moral decline of the clergy was confined chiefly to the Lutheran Church. The Reformed [Calvinistic] was earnest, pious, and aggressive"<sup>5</sup>—the usual result of official hostility.

In such circumstances, the active freethought existing in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century could not fail to affect Germany; and even before the date of the polemic of Garasse and Mersenne there appeared (1615) a counterblast to the new thought in the *Theologia Naturalis* of J. H. Alsted, of Frankfort, directed *adversus atheos, Epicureos, et sophistas hujus temporis*. The preface to this solid quarto (a remarkable sample of good printing for the period) declares that "there are men in this diseased (*exulcerato*)

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character..... of the Theology of Germany*, 1828, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 57-58 (last ed. pp. 74-76), citing Tholuck, *Deutsche Universitäten*, i, 145-48, and Dowding, *Life of Calixtus*, pp. 132-33.

<sup>4</sup> Pusey, p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> Hurst, p. 59.

age who dare to oppose science to revelation, reason to faith, nature to grace, the creator to the redeemer, and truth to truth"; and the writer undertakes to rise argumentatively from nature to the Christian God, without, however, transcending the logical plane of De Mornay. The trouble of the time, unhappily for the faith, was not rationalism, but the inextinguishable hatreds of Protestant and Catholic, and the strife of economic interests dating from the appropriations of the first reformers. At length, after a generation of gloomy suspense, came the explosion of the hostile ecclesiastical interests, and the long-drawn horror of the Thirty Years' War, which left Germany mangled, devastated, drained of blood and treasure, decivilized, and well-nigh destitute of the machinery of culture. No such printing as that of Alsted's book was to be done in the German world for many generations. But as in France, so in Germany, the exhausting experience of the moral and physical evil of religious war wrought something of an antidote, in the shape of a new spirit of rationalism.

Not only was the Peace of Westphalia an essentially secular arrangement, subordinating all religious claims to a political settlement,<sup>1</sup> but the drift of opinion was markedly freethinking. Already in 1630 one writer describes "three classes of skeptics among the nobility of Hamburg: first, those who believe that religion is nothing but a mere fiction, invented to keep the masses in restraint; second, those who give preference to no faith, but think that all religions have a germ of truth; and third, those who, confessing that there must be one true religion, are unable to decide whether it is papal, Calvinist, or Lutheran, and consequently believe nothing at all." No less explicit is the written testimony of Walther, the court chaplain of Ulrich II of East Friesland, 1637: "These infernal courtiers, among whom I am compelled to live against my will, doubt those truths which even the heathen have learned to believe."<sup>2</sup> In Germany as in France the freethinking which thus grew up during the religious war expanded after the peace. As usual, this is to be gathered from the orthodox propaganda against it, setting out in 1662 with a *Preservative against the Pest of Present-day Atheists*,<sup>3</sup> by one Theophilus Gegenbauer. So far was this from attaining its end that there ensued ere long a more positive and aggressive development of freethinking than any other country had yet seen. A wandering

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 308-309. "The result of the Thirty Years' War was indifference, not only to the Confession, but to religion in general. Ever since that period, secular interests decidedly occupy the foreground" (Kahn, *Internal History of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 21).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Bishop Hurst, ed. cited, p. 60 (78).

<sup>3</sup> *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten*.



scholar, MATTHIAS KNUTZEN of Holstein (b. 1645), who had studied philosophy at Königsberg, went about in 1674 teaching a hardy Religion of Humanity, rejecting alike immortality, God and Devil, churches and priests, and insisting that conscience could perfectly well take the place of the Bible as a guide to conduct. His doctrines are to be gathered chiefly from a curious Latin letter,<sup>1</sup> written by him for circulation, headed *Amicus Amicis Amica*; and in this the profession of atheism is explicit: "*Insuper Deum negamus.*" In two dialogues in German he set forth the same ideas. His followers, as holding by conscience, were called *Gewissener*; and he or another of his group asserted that in Jena alone there were seven hundred of them.<sup>2</sup> The figures were fantastic, and the whole movement passed rapidly out of sight—hardly by reason of the orthodox refutations, however. Germany was in no state to sustain such a party; and what happened was a necessarily slow gestation of the seed of new thought thus cast abroad.

Knutzen's Latin letter is given in full by a Welsh scholar settled in Germany, Jenkinus Thomasius (Jenkin Thomas), in his *Historia Atheismi* (Altdorf, 1692), ed. Basel, 1709, pp. 97-101; also by La Croze in his (anon.) *Entretiens sur divers sujets*, 1711, p. 402 sq. Thomasius thus codifies its doctrine:—"1. There is neither God nor Devil. 2. The magistrate is nothing to be esteemed; temples are to be condemned, priests to be rejected. 3. In place of the magistrate and the priest are to be put knowledge and reason, joined with conscience, which teaches to live honestly, to injure none, and to give each his own. 4. Marriage and free union do not differ. 5. This is the only life: after it, there is neither reward nor punishment. 6. The Scripture contradicts itself." Knutzen admittedly wrote like a scholar (Thomasius, p. 97); but his treatment of Scripture contradictions belongs to the infancy of criticism; though La Croze, replying thirty years later, could only meet it with charges of impiety and stupidity. As to the numbers of the movement see Trinius, *Freydenker Lexicon*, 1759, s. v. KNUTZEN. Kurtz (*Hist. of the Christian Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, i, 213) states that a careful academic investigation proved the claim to a membership of 700 to be an empty boast (citing H. Rossel, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1844, iv). This doubtless refers to the treatise of Musæus, Jena, 1675, cited by La Croze, p. 401. Some converts Knutzen certainly made; and as only the hardiest would dare to avow themselves, his influence may have been considerable. "Examples of total unbelief come only singly to knowledge," says Tholuck; "but total unbelief had still to the end of the

<sup>1</sup> Dated from Rome; but this was a mystification.

<sup>2</sup> Kahnis, p. 125; La Croze, *Entretiens*, 1711, p. 401.

century to bear penal treatment." He gives the instances (1) of the Swedish Baron Skytte, reported in 1669 by Spener to the Frankfort authorities for having said at table, before the court preacher, that the Scriptures were not holy, and not from God but from men; and (2) "a certain minister" who at the end of the century was prosecuted for blasphemy. (*Das kirchliche Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts*, 2 Abth. pp. 56-57.) Even Anabaptists were still liable to banishment in the middle of the century. *Id.* 1 Abth. 1861, p. 36. As to clerical intolerance see pp. 40-44. On the merits of the Knutzen movement cp. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christian Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i, 437-8.

2. While, however, clerical action could drive such a movement under the surface, it could not prevent the spread of rationalism in all directions; and there was now germinating a philosophic unbelief<sup>1</sup> under the influence of Spinoza. Nowhere were there more prompt and numerous answers to Spinoza than in Germany,<sup>2</sup> whence it may be inferred that within the educated class he soon had a good many adherents. In point of fact the Elector Palatine offered him a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg in 1673, promising him "the most ample freedom in philosophical teaching," and merely stipulating that he should not use it "to disturb the religion publicly established."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Professor Rappolt, of Leipzig, attacked him as an atheist, in an *Oratio contra naturalistas* in 1670; Professor Musæus, of Jena, assailed him in 1674;<sup>4</sup> and the Chancellor Kortholt, of Kiel, grouped him, Herbert, and Hobbes as *The Three Great Impostors* in 1680.<sup>5</sup> After the appearance of the *Ethica* the replies multiplied. On the other hand, Cuffelaer vindicated Spinoza in 1684; and in 1691 F. W. STOSCH, a court official, and son of the court preacher, published a stringent attack on revelationism, entitled *Concordia rationis et fidei*, partly on Spinozistic lines, which created much commotion, and was forcibly suppressed and condemned to be burnt by the hangman at Berlin,<sup>6</sup> as it denied not only the immateriality but the immortality of the soul and the historical truth of the Scriptural narratives. This seems to have been the first work of modern freethought published by a German,<sup>7</sup> apart from Knutzen's letter; but a partial list of the apologetic works

<sup>1</sup> Even Knutzen seems to have been influenced by Spinoza. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i, 437. Pünjer, however, seems to have exaggerated the connection.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 318 (Eng. tr. ii, 35).

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolæ ad Spinozam et Responsiones*, in Gfrörer, liii.

<sup>4</sup> Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, 1830, pp. lv, lvi.

<sup>5</sup> Pünjer, as cited, i, 434-36; Lange, last cit. Lange notes that Genthe's *Compendium de impostura religionum*, which has been erroneously assigned to the sixteenth century, must belong to the period of Kortholt's work.

<sup>6</sup> Pünjer, p. 439; Lange, last cit.; Tholuck, *Kirch. Leben*, 2 Abth. pp. 57-58.

<sup>7</sup> It was nominally issued at Amsterdam, really at Berlin.



of the period, from Gegenbauer onwards, may suffice to suggest the real vogue of heterodox opinions:—

1662. Th. Gegenbauer. *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten*. Erfurt.  
 1668. J. Musæus. *Examen Cherburianismi. Contra E. Herbertum de Cherbury*.  
 „ Anton Reiser. *De origine, progressu, et incremento Antitheismi seu Atheismi*.<sup>1</sup> Augsburg.  
 1670. Rappolt. *Oratio contra Naturalistas*. Leipzig.  
 1672. J. Müller. *Atheismus devictus* (in German). Hamburg.  
 „ J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica* (in German).  
 1673. — *Besiegte Atheisterei*.  
 „ Chr. Pfaff. *Disputatio contra Atheistas*.  
 1674. J. Musæus. *Spinozismus*. Jena.  
 1677. Val. Greissing. *Corona Transylvani; Exerc. 2, de Atheismo, contra Cartesium et Math. Knutzen*. Wittemberg.  
 „ Tobias Wagner. *Examen.....atheismi speculativi*. Tübingen.  
 „ K. Rudrauff, Giessen. *Dissertatio de Atheismo*.  
 1680. Chr. Kortholt. *De tribus impostoribus magnis liber*. Kiloni.  
 1689. Th. Undereyck. *Der Nürrische Atheist in seiner Thorheit ueberzeugt*. Bremen.  
 1692. Jenkinus Thomasius. *Historia Atheismi*. Altdorf.  
 1696. J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica*. Reprint.  
 1697. A. H. Grosse. *An Atheismus necessario ducat ad corruptionem morum*. Rostock.  
 „ Em. Weber. *Beurtheilung der Atheisterei*.  
 1700. Tribbechov. *Historia Naturalismi*. Jena.  
 1708. Loescher. *Prænotiones Theologicæ contra Naturalistarum et Fanaticorum omne genus, Atheos, Deistas, Indifferentistas, etc.* Wittemberg.  
 „ Schwartz. *Demonstrationes Dei*. Leipzig.  
 „ Rechenberg. *Fundamenta veræ religionis Prudentum, adversus Atheos, etc.*  
 1710. J. C. Wolfius. *Dissertatio de Atheismi falso suspectis*. Wittemberg.  
 1713. J. N. Fromman. *Atheni Stultus*. Tübingen.  
 „ Anon. *Widerlegung der Atheisten, Deisten, und neuen Zweifeler*. Frankfort.

[Later came the works of Buddeus (1716) and Reimmann and Fabricius, noted above, vol. i, ch. i, § 2.]

3. For a community in which the reading class was mainly clerical and scholastic, the seeds of rationalism were thus in part sown in the seventeenth century; but the ground was not yet propitious. LEIBNITZ (1646–1716), the chief thinker produced by Germany before Kant, lived in a state of singular intellectual isolation;<sup>2</sup> and showed his sense of it by writing his philosophic treatises chiefly in French. One of the most widely learned men of his age, he was wont from his boyhood to grapple critically with every system of thought that came in his way; and, while claiming to be

<sup>1</sup> This writer gives (p. 12) a notable list of the forms of atheism: *Atheismus directus, indirectus, formalis, virtualis, theoreticus, practicus, inchoatus, consummatus, subtilis, crassus, privativus, negativus*, and so on, *ad lib.*  
<sup>2</sup> Cp. *Buckle and his Critics*, pp. 171–72; Pünjer, i. 515.

always eager to learn,<sup>1</sup> he was as a rule strongly concerned to affirm his own powerful bias. Early in life he writes that it horrifies him to think how many men he has met who were at once intelligent and atheistic;<sup>2</sup> and his propaganda is always dominated by the desire rather to confute unbelief than to find out the truth. As early as 1668 (aet. 22) he wrote an essay to that end, which was published as a *Confessio naturæ contra Atheistas*. Against Spinoza he reacted instantly and violently, pronouncing the *Tractatus* on its first (anonymous) appearance an “unbearably bold (*licentiosum*) book,” and resenting the Hobbesian criticism which it “dared to apply to sacred Scripture.”<sup>3</sup> Yet in the next year we find him writing to Arnauld in earnest protest against the hidebound orthodoxy of the Church. “A philosophic age,” he declares, “is about to begin, in which the concern for truth, flourishing outside the schools, will spread even among politicians. Nothing is more likely to strengthen atheism and to upset faith, already so shaken by the attacks of great but bad men [a pleasing allusion to Spinoza], than to see on the one side the mysteries of the faith preached upon as the creed of all, and on the other hand become matter of derision to all, convicted of absurdity by the most certain rules of common reason. The worst enemies of the Church are in the Church. Let us take care lest the latest heresy—I will not say atheism, but—naturalism, be publicly professed.”<sup>4</sup> For a time he seemed thus disposed to liberalize. He wrote to Spinoza on points of optics before he discovered the authorship; and he is represented later as speaking of the *Tractatus* with respect. He even visited Spinoza in 1676, and obtained a perusal of the manuscript of the *Ethica*; but he remained hostile to him in theology and philosophy. To the last he called Spinoza a mere developer of Descartes,<sup>5</sup> whom he also habitually resisted.

This was not hopeful; and Leibnitz, with all his power and originality, really wrought little for the direct rationalization of religious thought.<sup>6</sup> His philosophy, with all its ingenuity, has the common stamp of the determination of the theist to find reasons for the God in whom he believed beforehand; and his principle that all is for the best is the fatal rounding of his argumentative circle. Thus his doctrine that that is true which is clear was turned to the

<sup>1</sup> Letter cited by Dr. Latta, *Leibniz*, 1898, p. 2, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i. 26; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Thomas, December 23, 1670.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Tholuck, as last cited, p. 61. Spener took the same tone.

<sup>5</sup> *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i. 34; ii. 563; Latta, p. 24; Martineau, p. 75. Cp. *Refutation of Spinoza by Leibnitz*, ed. by Foucher de Careil, Eng. tr. 1855.

<sup>6</sup> His notable surmise as to gradation of species (see Latta, pp. 38–39) was taken up among the French materialists, but did not then modify current science.



account of an empiricism of which the "clearness" was really predetermined by the conviction of truth. His *Theodicee*,<sup>1</sup> written in reply to Bayle, is by the admission even of admirers<sup>2</sup> a process of begging the question. Deity, a mere "infinite" of finite qualities, is proved *a priori*, though it is expressly argued that a finite mind cannot grasp infinity; and the necessary goodness of necessary deity is posited in the same fashion. It is very significant that such a philosopher, himself much given to denying the religiousness of other men's theories, was nevertheless accused among both the educated and the populace of being essentially non-religious. Nominally he adhered to the entire Christian system, including miracles, though he declared that his belief in dogma rested on the agreement of reason with faith, and claimed to keep his thought free on unassailed truths;<sup>3</sup> and he always discussed the Bible as a believer; yet he rarely went to church;<sup>4</sup> and the Low German nickname *Lövenix* (= *Glaubet nichts*, "believes nothing") expressed his local reputation. No clergyman attended his funeral; but indeed no one else went, save his secretary.<sup>5</sup> It is on the whole difficult to doubt that his indirect influence not only in Germany but elsewhere had been and has been for deism and atheism.<sup>6</sup> He and Newton were the most distinguished mathematicians and theists of the age; and Leibnitz, as we saw, busied himself to show that the philosophy of Newton<sup>7</sup> tended to atheism, and that that of their theistic predecessor Descartes would not stand criticism.<sup>8</sup> Spinoza being, according to him, in still worse case, and Locke hardly any sounder,<sup>9</sup> there remained for theists only his cosmology of monads and his ethic of optimism—all for the best in the best of all possible worlds—which seems at least as well fitted as any other theism to make thoughtful men give up the principle.

4. Other culture-conditions concurred to set up a spirit of rationalism in Germany. After the Thirty Years' War there arose a religious movement, called *Pietism* by its theological opponents, which aimed at an emotional inwardness of religious

<sup>1</sup> The only lengthy treatise published by him in his lifetime.

<sup>2</sup> M. A. Jacques, intr. to *Œuvres de Leibniz*, 1846, i, 54-57.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Tholuck, *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. pp. 52-55. Kahnis, coinciding with Erdmann, pronounces that, although Leibnitz "acknowledges the God of the Christian faith, yet his system assigned to Him a very uncertain position only" (*Int. Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 26).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Pünjer, i, 509, as to his attitude on ritual.

<sup>5</sup> Latta, as cited, p. 16; *Vie de Leibnitz*, par De Jaucourt, in ed. 1747 of the *Essais de Théodicee*, i, 235-39.

<sup>6</sup> As to his virtual deism see Pünjer, i, 513-15. But he proposed to send Christian missionaries to the heathen. Tholuck, as last cited, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> *Lettres entre Leibnitz et Clarke*.

<sup>8</sup> *Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, §§ 68-70; *Essais sur la bonté de Dieu*, etc., §§ 50, 61, 164, 180, 292-93.

<sup>9</sup> The *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain*, refuting Locke, appeared posthumously in 1765. Locke had treated his theistic critic with contempt. (Latta, p. 13.)

life as against what its adherents held to be an irreligious orthodoxy around them.<sup>1</sup> Contending against rigid articles of credence, they inevitably prepared the way for less credent forms of thought.<sup>2</sup> Though the first leaders of Pietism grew embittered with their unsuccess and the attacks of their religious enemies,<sup>3</sup> their impulse went far, and greatly influenced the clergy through the university of Halle, which in the first part of the eighteenth century turned out 6,000 clergymen in one generation.<sup>4</sup> Against the Pietists were furiously arrayed the Lutherans of the old order, who even contrived in many places to suppress their schools.<sup>5</sup> Virtues generated under persecution, however, underwent the law of degeneration which dogs all intellectual subjection; and the inner life of Pietism, lacking mental freedom and intellectual play, grew as cramped in its emotionalism as that of orthodoxy in its dogmatism. Religion was thus represented by a species of extremely unattractive and frequently absurd formalists on the one hand, and on the other by a school which at its best unsettled religious usage, and otherwise tended alternately to fanaticism and cant.<sup>6</sup> Thus "the rationalist tendencies of the age were promoted by this treble exhibition of the aberrations of belief."<sup>7</sup> "How sorely," says Tholuck, "the hold not only of ecclesiastical but of Biblical belief on men of all grades had been shaken at the beginning of the eighteenth century is seen in many instances."<sup>8</sup> Orthodoxy selects that of a Holstein student who hanged himself at Wittemberg in 1688, leaving written in his New Testament, in Latin, the declaration that "Our soul is mortal; religion is a popular delusion, invented to gull the ignorant, and so govern the world the better."<sup>9</sup> But again there is the testimony of the mint-master at Hanover that at court there all lived as "free atheists." And though the name "freethinker" was not yet much used in discussion, it had become current in the form of *Freigeist*—the German equivalent still used. This, as we have noted,<sup>10</sup> was probably a survival from the name of the old sect of the "Free Spirit," rather than an adaptation from the French *esprit fort* or the English "freethinker."

<sup>1</sup> Amand Saintes, *Hist. crit. du Rationalisme en Allemagne*, 1841, ch. vi; Heinrich Schmid, *Die Geschichte des Pietismus*, 1863, ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Saintes, p. 51; cp. Pusey, p. 105, as to "the want of resistance from the school of Pietists to the subsequent invasion of unbelief."

<sup>3</sup> Hagenbach, *German Rationalism*, Eng. tr. 1865, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. 39; Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Causes of German Rationalism*, 1828, pp. 88, 97; Tholuck, *Abriss einer Geschichte des Umwälzung.....seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland*, in *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Pusey, pp. 86, 87, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Pusey, pp. 37-38, 45, 48, 49, 53-54, 79, 101-109; Saintes, pp. 28, 79-80; Hagenbach, pp. 41, 72, 105.

<sup>7</sup> Pusey, p. 110. Cp. Saintes, ch. vi.

<sup>8</sup> *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Id. pp. 56-57.

<sup>10</sup> Vol. i, p. 6.



5. After the collapse of the popular movement of Matthias Knutzen, the thin end of the new wedge may be seen in the manifold work of CHRISTIAN THOMASIVS (1655-1728), who in 1687 published a treatise on "Divine Jurisprudence," in which the principles of Pufendorf on natural law, already offensive to the theologians, were carried so far as to give new offence. Reading Pufendorf in his nonage as a student of jurisprudence, he was so conscious of the conflict between the utilitarian and the Scriptural view of moral law that, taught by a master who had denounced Pufendorf, he recoiled in a state of theological fear.<sup>1</sup> Some years later, gaining self-possession, he recognized the rationality of Pufendorf's system, and both expounded and defended him, thus earning his share in the hostility which the great jurist encountered at clerical hands. Between that hostility and the naturalist bias which he had acquired from Pufendorf, there grew up in him an aversion to the methods and pretensions of theologians which made him their lifelong antagonist.<sup>2</sup> Pufendorf had but guardedly introduced some of the fundamental principles of Hobbes, relating morals to the social state, and thus preparing the way for utilitarianism.<sup>3</sup> This sufficed to make the theologians his enemies; and it is significant that Thomasius, heterodox at the outset only thus far forth, becomes from that point onwards an important pioneer of freethought, toleration, and humane reform. Innovating in all things, he began, while still a *Privatdocent* at Leipzig University, a campaign on behalf of the German language; and, not content with arousing much pedantic enmity by delivering lectures for the first time in his mother tongue, and deriding at the same time the bad scholastic Latin of his compatriots, he set on foot the first vernacular German periodical,<sup>4</sup> which ran for two years (1688-90), and caused so much anger that he was twice prosecuted before the ecclesiastical court of Dresden, the second time on a charge of contempt of religion. The periodical was in effect a crusade against all the pedantries, the theologians coming in for the hardest blows.<sup>5</sup> Other satirical writings, and a

<sup>1</sup> H. Luden, *Christian Thomasius nach seinen Schicksalen und Schriften dargestellt*, 1805, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Schmid, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, pp. 486-88. Pufendorf's bulky treatise *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium* was published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672. The shorter *De Officio hominis et civis* (also Lund, 1673) is a condensation and partly a vindication of the other, and this it was that convinced Thomasius. As to Pufendorf's part in the transition from theological to rational moral philosophy, see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iv, 171-78. He is fairly to be bracketed with Cumberland; but Hallam hardly recognizes that it was the challenge of Hobbes that forced the change.

<sup>3</sup> *Freimüthige, lustige und ernsthafte, jedoch vernunft- und gesetzmässige Gedanken, oder Monatgespräche über allerhand, vornehmlich über neue Bücher*. There had been an earlier *Acta Eruditorum*, in Latin, published at Leipzig, and a French *Ephemerides savantes*, Hamburg, 1686. Other German and French periodicals soon followed that of Thomasius. Luden, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> Schmid, pp. 488-92, gives a sketch of some of the contents.

defence of intermarriage between Calvinists and Lutherans,<sup>1</sup> at length put him in such danger that, to escape imprisonment, he sought the protection of the Elector of Brandenburg at Halle, where he ultimately became professor of jurisprudence in the new university, founded by his advice. There for a time he leant towards the Pietists, finding in that body a concern for natural liberty of feeling and thinking which was absent from the mental life of orthodoxy; but he was "of another spirit" than they, and took his own way.

In philosophy an unsystematic pantheist, he taught, after Plutarch, Bayle, and Bacon, that "superstition is worse than atheism"; but his great practical service to German civilization, over and above his furthering of the native speech, was his vigorous polemic against prosecutions for heresy, trials for witchcraft, and the use of torture, all of which he did more than any other German to discredit, though judicial torture subsisted for another half-century.<sup>2</sup> It was by his propaganda that the princes of Germany were moved to abolish all trials for sorcery.<sup>3</sup> In such a battle he of course had the clergy against him all along the line; and it is as an anti-clerical that he figures in clerical history. The clerical hostility to his ethics he repaid with interest, setting himself to develop to the utmost, in the interest of lay freedom, the Lutheran admission of the divine right of princes.<sup>4</sup> This he turned not against freedom of opinion but against ecclesiastical claims, very much in the spirit of Hobbes, who may have influenced him.

The perturbed Mosheim, while candidly confessing that Thomasius is the founder of academic freedom in Germany, pronounces that the "famous jurists" who were led by Thomasius "set up a new fundamental principle of church polity—namely, the supreme authority and power of the civil magistrate," so tending to create the opinion "that the ministers of religion are not to be accounted ambassadors of God, but vicegerents of the chief magistrates. They also weakened not a little the few remaining prerogatives and advantages which were left of the vast number formerly possessed

<sup>1</sup> Pusey, p. 86, note. It is surprising that Pusey does not make more account of Thomasius's naturalistic treatment of polygamy and suicide, which he showed to be not criminal in terms of natural law.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Lit.* § 81 (ed. 1880, pp. 90-91); Pusey, as cited, p. 114, note; Enfield's *Hist. of Philos.* (abst. of Brucker's *Hist. crit. philos.*), 1840, pp. 610-612; Ueberweg, ii, 115; and Schlegel's note in Reid's Mosheim, p. 790, with Karl Hillebrand, *Six Lect. on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, pp. 64-65. There is a modern monograph by A. Nicoladoni, *Christian Thomasius; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Aufklärung*, 1888.

<sup>3</sup> Baron de Bielfeld, *Progrès des Allemands*, 3e éd. 1767, i, 24. "Before Thomasius," writes Bielfeld, "an old woman could not have red eyes without running the risk of being accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake."

<sup>4</sup> Schmid, pp. 493-97. Thomasius's principal writings on this theme were: *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in Mitteldingen* (1692); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in theologischen Streitigkeiten* (1696); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten gegen Ketzer* (1697).



by the clergy; and maintained that many of the maxims and regulations of our churches which had come down from our fathers were relics of popish superstition. This afforded matter for long and pernicious feuds and contests between our theologians and our jurists.....It will be sufficient for us to observe, what is abundantly attested, that they diminished much in various places the respect for the clergy, the reverence for religion, and the security and prosperity of the Lutheran Church."<sup>1</sup> Pusey, in turn, grudgingly allows that "the study of history was revived and transformed through the views of Thomasius."<sup>2</sup>

6. A personality of a very different kind emerges in the same period in Johann Conrad Dippel (1673-1734), who developed a system of rationalistic mysticism, and as to whom, says an orthodox historian, "one is doubtful whether to place him in the class of pietists or of rationalists, of enthusiasts or of scoffers, of mystics or of freethinkers."<sup>3</sup> The son of a preacher, he yet "exhibited in his ninth year strong doubts as to the catechism." After a tolerably free life as a student he turned Pietist at Strasburg, lectured on astrology and palmistry, preached, and got into trouble with the police. In 1698 he published under the pen-name of "Christianus Democritus" his book, *Gestüptes Papstthum der Protestirenden* ("The Popery of the Protestantizers Whipped"), in which he so attacked the current Christian ethic of salvation as to exasperate both Churches.<sup>4</sup> The stress of his criticism fell firstly on the unthinking Scripturalism of the average Protestant, who, he said, while reproaching the Catholic with setting up in the crucifix a God of wood, was apt to make for himself a God of paper.<sup>5</sup> In his repudiation of the "bargain" or "redemption" doctrine of the historic Church he took up positions which were as old as Abailard, and which were one day to become respectable; but in his own life he was much of an Ishmaelite, with wild notions of alchemy and gold-making; and after predicting that he should live till 1808, he died suddenly in 1734, leaving a doctrine which appealed only to those constitutionally inclined, on the lines of the earlier English Quakers, to set the inner light above Scripture.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ec. Hist.* 17 Cent. sect. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 11, 14. It is noteworthy that the Pietists at Halle did not scruple to ally themselves for a time with Thomasius, he being opposed to the orthodox party. Kahn, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Pusey, as cited, p. 121. Cp. p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrh.* 2te Aufl. i, 164. (This matter is not in the abridged translation.)

<sup>4</sup> See the furious account of him by Mosheim, 17 C. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, § 33.

<sup>5</sup> Hagenbach, last cit. p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Th. iii, Kap. 1; Bruno Bauer, *Einfluss des englischen Quäkerthums auf die deutsche Cultur und auf das englisch-russische Projekt einer Weltkirche*, 1878, pp. 41-44.

7. Among the pupils of Thomasius at Halle was Theodore Louis Lau, who, born of an aristocratic family, became Minister of Finances to the Duke of Courland, and after leaving that post held a high place in the service of the Elector Palatine. While holding that office Lau published a small Latin volume of *pensées* entitled *Meditationes Theologicae-Physicae*, notably deistic in tone. This gave rise to such an outcry among the clergy that he had to leave Frankfort, only, however, to be summoned before the consistory of Königsberg, his native town, and charged with atheism (1719). He thereupon retired to Altona, where he had freedom enough to publish a reply to his clerical persecutors.<sup>1</sup>

8. While Thomasius was still at work, a new force arose of a more distinctly academic cast. This was the adaptation of Leibnitz's system by CHRISTIAN WOLFF, who, after building up a large influence among students by his method of teaching,<sup>2</sup> came into public prominence by a rectorial address<sup>3</sup> at Halle (1721) in which he warmly praised the ethics of Confucius. Such praise was naturally held to imply disparagement of Christianity; and as a result of the pietist outcry Wolff was condemned by the king to exile from Prussia, under penalty of the gallows,<sup>4</sup> all "atheistical" writings being at the same time forbidden. Wolff's system, however, prevailed so completely, in virtue of its lucidity and the rationalizing tendency of the age, that in the year 1738 there were said to be already 107 authors of his cast of thinking. Nevertheless, he refused to return to Halle on any invitation till the accession (1740) of Frederick the Great, one of his warmest admirers, whereafter he figured as the German thinker of his age. His teaching, which for the first time popularized philosophy in the German language, in turn helped greatly, by its ratiocinative cast, to promote the rationalistic temper, though orthodox enough from the modern point of view. Under the new reign, however, pietism and Wolffism alike lost prestige,<sup>5</sup> and the age of anti-Christian and Christian rationalism began. Thus the period of free-thinking in Germany follows close upon one of religious revival. The 6,000 theologians trained at Halle in the first generation of the century had "worked like a leaven through all Germany."<sup>6</sup> "Not since the time of the Reformation had Germany such a large number of truly pious preachers and laymen as towards the end of the first

<sup>1</sup> Pref. to French tr. of the *Meditationes*, 1770, pp. xii-xvii. Lau died in 1740.

<sup>2</sup> Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Trans. in English, 1750.

<sup>4</sup> Hagenbach, tr. pp. 35-36; Saintes, p. 61; Kahn, as cited, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Hagenbach, pp. 37-39. It is to be observed (Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 23) that the Wolffian philosophy was reinstated in Prussia by royal mandate in 1739, a year before the accession of Frederick the Great. But we know that Frederick championed him.

<sup>6</sup> Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 5.



half of the eighteenth century."<sup>1</sup> There, as elsewhere, religion intellectually collapsed.

As to Wolff's rationalistic influence see Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 173; Pusey, pp. 115-19; Pünjer, p. 529; Lechler, pp. 448-49. "It cannot be questioned that, in his philosophy, the main stress rests upon the rational" (Kahnis, as cited, p. 28). "Francke and Lange (pietists)..... saw atheism and corruption of manners springing up from Wolff's school" (before his exile). *Id.* p. 113. Wolff's chief offence lay in stressing natural religion, and in indicating, as Tholuck observes, that that could be demonstrated, whereas revealed religion could only be believed (*Abriss*, p. 18). He greatly pleased Voltaire by the dictum that men ought to be just even though they had the misfortune to be atheists. It is noted by Tholuck, however (*Abriss*, as cited, p. 11, note), that the decree for Wolff's expulsion was inspired not by his theological colleagues but by two military advisers of the king. Tholuck's own criticism resolves itself into a protest against Wolff's predilection for logical connection in his exposition. The fatal thing was that Wolff accustomed German Christians to reason.

9. Even before the generation of active pressure from English and French deism there were clear signs that rationalism had taken root in German life. On the impulse set up by the establishment of the Grand Lodge at London in 1717, Freemasonic lodges began to spring up in Germany, the first being founded at Hamburg in 1733.<sup>2</sup> The deism which in the English lodges was later toned down by orthodox reaction was from the first pronounced in the German societies, which ultimately passed on the tradition to the other parts of the Continent. But the new spirit was not confined to secret societies. Wolffianism worked widely. In the so-called *Wertheim Bible* (1735) Johann Lorenz Schmid, in the spirit of the Leibnitz-Wolffian theology, "undertook to translate the Bible, and to explain it according to the principle that in revelation only that can be accepted as true which does not contradict the reason."<sup>3</sup> This of course involved no thorough-going criticism; but the spirit of innovation was strong enough in Schmid to make him undermine tradition at many points, and later carried him so far as to translate Tindal's *Christianity as old as Creation*. So far was he in advance of his time that when his *Wertheim Bible* was officially condemned throughout Germany he found no defenders.<sup>4</sup> The Wolffians were

<sup>1</sup> Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Pünjer, i, 544. Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, pp. 19-22.

<sup>3</sup> Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 22. Schmid was for a time supposed to be the author of the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* of Reimarus (below, p. 327).

<sup>4</sup> Kahnis, p. 55.

in comparison generally orthodox; and another writer of the same school, Martin Knutzen, professor at Königsberg (1715-1751), undertook in a youthful thesis *De æternitate mundi impossibili* (1735) to rebut the old Averroist doctrine, revived by modern science, of the indestructibility of the universe. A few years later (1739) he published a treatise entitled *The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated by Mathematics*, which succeeded as might have been expected.

10. To the same period belong the first activities of JOHANN CHRISTIAN EDELMANN (1698-1767), one of the most energetic freethinkers of his age. Trained philosophically at Jena under the theologian Budde, a bitter opponent of Wolff, and theologically in the school of the Pietists, he was strongly influenced against official orthodoxy through reading the *Impartial History of the Church and of Heretics*, by Gottfried Arnold, an eminently anti-clerical work, which nearly always takes the side of the heretics.<sup>1</sup> In the same heterodox direction he was swayed by the works of Dippel. At this stage Edelmann produced his *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* ("Innocent Truths"), in which he takes up a pronouncedly rationalist and latitudinarian position, but without rejecting "revelation"; and in 1736 he went to Berleburg, where he worked on the Berleburg translation of the Bible, a Pietist undertaking, somewhat on the lines of Dippel's mystical doctrine, in which a variety of incredible Scriptural narratives, from the six days' creation onwards, are turned to mystical purpose.<sup>2</sup> In this occupation Edelmann seems to have passed some years. Gradually, however, he came more and more under the influence of the English deists; and he at length withdrew from the Pietist camp, attacking his former associates for the fanaticism into which their thought was degenerating. It was under the influence of Spinoza, however, that he took his most important steps. A few months after meeting with the *Tractatus* he began (1740) the first part of his treatise *Moses mit aufgedecktem Angesichte* ("Moses with unveiled face"), an attack at once on the doctrine of inspiration and on that of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The book was intended to consist of twelve parts; but after the appearance of three it was prohibited by the imperial fisc, and the published parts burned by the hangman at Hamburg and elsewhere. Nonetheless, Edelmann continued his propaganda, publishing in 1741 or 1742 *The Divinity*

<sup>1</sup> *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1699-1700, 2 tom. fol.—fuller ed. 3 tom. fol. 1740. Compare Mosheim's angry account of it with Murdock's note in defence: Reid's ed. p. 804. Bruno Bauer describes it as epoch-making (*Einfluss des englischen Quäkertums*, p. 42). This history had a great influence on Goethe in his teens, leading him, he says, to the conviction that he, like so many other men, should have a religion of his own, which he goes on to describe. It was a re-hash of Gnosticism. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 344 sq.)

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 171; Pünjer, i, 279.



of Reason,<sup>1</sup> and in 1741 *Christ and Belial*. In 1749 or 1750 his works were again publicly burned at Frankfurt by order of the imperial authorities; and he had much ado to find anywhere in Germany safe harbourage, till he found protection under Frederick at Berlin, where he died in 1767.

Edelmann's teaching was essentially Spinozist and pantheistic,<sup>2</sup> with a leaning to the doctrine of metempsychosis. As a pantheist he of course entirely rejected the divinity of Jesus, pronouncing inspiration the appanage of all; and the gospels were by him dismissed as late fabrications, from which the true teachings of the founder could not be learned; though, like nearly all the freethinkers of that age, he estimated Jesus highly.<sup>3</sup> A German theologian complains, nevertheless, that he was "more just toward heathenism than toward Judaism; and more just toward Judaism than toward Christianity"; adding: "What he taught had been thoroughly and ingeniously said in France and England; but from a German theologian, and that with such eloquent coarseness, with such a mastery in expatiating in blasphemy, such things were unheard of."<sup>4</sup> The force of Edelmann's attack may be gathered from the same writer's account of him as a "bird of prey" who rose to a "wicked height of opposition, not only against the Lutheran Church, but against Christianity in general."

11. Even from decorous and official exponents of religion, however, there came "naturalistic" and semi-rationalistic teaching, as in the *Reflections on the most important truths of religion*<sup>5</sup> (1768-1769) of J. F. W. Jerusalem, Abbot of Marienthal in Brunswick, and later of Riddagshausen (1709-1789). Jerusalem had travelled in Europe, and had spent two years in Holland and one in England, where he studied the deists and their opponents. "In England alone," he declared, "is mankind original."<sup>6</sup> Though really written by way of defending Christianity against the freethinkers, in par-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Göttlichkeit der Vernunft*.

<sup>2</sup> Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 2: *Saintes*, pp. 85-86; Pünjer, p. 442. It is interesting to find Edelmann supplying a formula latterly utilized by the so-called "New Theology" in England—the thesis that "the reality of everything which exists is God," and that there can therefore be no atheists, since he who recognizes the universe recognizes God.

<sup>3</sup> Naigeon, by altering the words of Diderot, caused him to appear one of the exceptions; but he was not. See Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, Vorb. p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Kahn, pp. 128-29. Edelmann's life was written by Pratje, *Historische Nachrichten von Edelmann's Leben*, 1755. It gives a list of replies to his writings (p. 205 sq.). Apropos of the first issue of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, a volume of *Erinnerungen* of Edelmann was published at Clausthal in 1839 by W. Elster; and Strauss in his *Dogmatik* avowed the pleasure with which he had made the acquaintance of so interesting a writer. A collection of extracts from Edelmann's works, entitled *Der neu eröffnete Edelmann*, was published at Bern in 1847; and the *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* was reprinted in 1846. His Autobiography, written in 1752, was published in 1849.

<sup>5</sup> *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion*. Another apologetic work of the period marked by rational moderation and tolerance was the *Vertheidigten Glauben der Christen* of the Berlin court-preacher A. W. F. Sack (1754).

<sup>6</sup> Art. by Wagenmann in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*.

ticular against Bolingbroke and Voltaire,<sup>1</sup> the very title of his book is suggestive of a process of disintegration; and in it certain unedifying Scriptural miracles are actually rejected.<sup>2</sup> It was probably this measure of adaptation to new needs that gave it its great popularity in Germany and secured its translation into several other languages. Goethe called him a "freely and gently thinking theologian"; and a modern orthodox historian of the Church groups him with those who "contributed to the spread of Rationalism by sermons and by popular doctrinal and devotional works."<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem was, however, at most a semi-rationalist, taking a view of the fundamental Christian dogmas which approached closely to that of Locke.<sup>4</sup> It was, as Goethe said later, the epoch of common sense; and the very theologians tended to a "religion of nature."<sup>5</sup>

12. Alongside of home-made heresy there had come into play a new initiative force in the literature of English deism, which began to be translated after 1740,<sup>6</sup> and was widely circulated till, in the last third of the century, it was superseded by the French. The English answers to the deists were frequently translated likewise, and notoriously helped to promote deism<sup>7</sup>—another proof that it was not their influence that had changed the balance of activity in England. Under a freethinking king, even clergymen began guardedly to accept the deistic methods; and the optimism of Shaftesbury began to overlay the optimism of Leibnitz,<sup>8</sup> while a French scientific influence began with La Mettrie,<sup>9</sup> Maupertuis, and Robinet. Even the Leibnitzian school, proceeding on the principle of immortal monads, developed a doctrine of the immortality of the souls of animals<sup>10</sup>—a position not helpful to orthodoxy. There was thus a general stirring of doubt among educated people,<sup>11</sup> and we find mention in Goethe's Autobiography of an old gentleman of Frankfort who

<sup>1</sup> Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 355.

<sup>2</sup> Pünjer, i, 542.

<sup>3</sup> Kurz, *Hist. of the Christian Church from the Reformation*, Eng. tr. ii, 274. A Jesuit, A. Merz, wrote four replies to Jerusalem. One was entitled *Frag ob durch die biblische Simplizität allein ein Freidenker oder Deist bekehret.....werden könne* ("Can a Freethinker or Deist be converted by Biblical Simplicity alone?"), 1775.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hagenbach, i, 353; tr. p. 120. Jerusalem was the father of the gifted youth whose suicide (1775) moved Goethe to write *The Sorrows of Werther*, a false presentment of the real personality, which stirred Lessing (his affectionate friend) to publish a volume of the dead youth's essays, in vindication of his character. The father had considerable influence in purifying German style. Cp. Goethe, *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. ii, B. vii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 272; and Hagenbach, i, 354.

<sup>5</sup> Goethe, as last cited, pp. 268-69.

<sup>6</sup> Lechler, *Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 447-52. The translations began with that of Tindal (1741), which made a great sensation.

<sup>7</sup> Pusey, pp. 125, 127, citing Twisten; Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, p. 36, citing Ernesti. Thorschmidt's *Freidenker Bibliothek*, issued in 1765-67, collected both translations and refutations. Lechler, p. 451.

<sup>8</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 405 (Eng. tr. ii, 146-47).

<sup>9</sup> Lange, i, 347, 399 (Eng. tr. ii, 76, 137).

<sup>10</sup> Lange, i, 396-97 (ii, 134-35).

<sup>11</sup> Goethe tells of having seen in his boyhood, at Frankfort, an irreligious French romance publicly burned, and of having his interest in the book thereby awakened. But this seems to have been during the French occupation. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. iv; *Werke*, xi, 146.)



avowed, as against the optimists, "Even in God I find defects (*Fehler*)."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, there were instances in Germany of the phenomenon, already seen in England in Newton and Boyle, of men of science devoting themselves to the defence of the faith. The most notable cases were those of the mathematician Euler and the biologist von Haller. The latter wrote *Letters (to his Daughter) On the most important Truths of Revelation* (1772)<sup>2</sup> and other apologetic works. Euler in 1747 published at Berlin, where he was professor, his *Defence of Revelation against the Reproaches of Freethinkers*;<sup>3</sup> and in 1769 his *Letters to a German Princess*, of which the argument notably coincides with part of that of Berkeley against the free-thinking mathematicians. Haller's position comes to the same thing. All three men, in fact, grasped at the argument of despair—the inadequacy of the human faculties to sound the mystery of things; and all alike were entirely unable to see that it logically cancelled their own judgments. Even a theologian, contemplating Haller's theorem of an incomprehensible omnipotence countered in its merciful plan of salvation by the set of worms it sought to save, comments on the childishness of the philosophy which confidently described the plans of deity in terms of what it declared to be the blank ignorance of the worms in question.<sup>4</sup> Euler and Haller, like some later men of science, kept their scientific method for the mechanical or physical problems of their scientific work, and brought to the deepest problems of all the self-will, the emotionalism, and the irresponsibility of the ignorant average man. Each did but express in his own way the resentment of the undisciplined mind at attacks upon its prejudices; and Haller's resort to poetry as a vehicle for his religion gives the measure of his powers on that side. Thus in Germany as in England the "answer" to the freethinkers was a failure. Men of science playing at theology and theologians playing at science alike failed to turn the tide of opinion, now socially favoured by the known deism of the king. German orthodoxy, says a recent Christian apologist, fell "with a rapidity reminding one of the capture of Jericho."<sup>5</sup> Goethe, writing of the general attitude to Christianity about 1768, sums up that "the Christian religion wavered between its own historic-positive base and a pure deism, which, grounded on morality, was in turn to re-establish ethics."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* B. iv. end.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into English 1780; 2nd ed. 1793. The translator claims for Haller great learning (2nd ed. p. xix). He seems in reality to have had very little, as he represents that Jesus in his day "was the only teacher who recommended chastity to men" (p. 82).

<sup>3</sup> *Rettung der Offenbarung gegen die Einwürfe der Freigeister*. Haller wrote under a similar title, 1775-76.

<sup>4</sup> Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv. 599.

<sup>5</sup> Gostwick, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, xi, 329.

Frederick's attitude, said an early Kantian, had had "an almost magical influence" on popular opinion (Willich, *Elements of the Critical Philosophy*, 1798, p. 2). With this his French teachers must have had much to do. Lord Morley pronounces (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 123) that French deism "never made any impression on Germany," and that "the teaching of Leibnitz and Wolff stood like a fortified wall against the French invasion." This is contradicted by much German testimony; in particular by Lange's (*Gesch. des Mater.* i, 318), though he notes that French materialism could not get the upper hand. Laukhard, who expressed the highest admiration for Tindal, as having wholly delivered him from dogmatism, avowed that Voltaire, whom everybody read, had perhaps done more harm to priest religion than all the books of the English and German deists together (*Leben*, 1792-1802, Th. i, p. 268).

Tholuck gravely affirms (*Abriss*, p. 33) that the acquaintance with the French "deistery and frivolity" in Germany belongs to a "somewhat later period than that of the English." Naturally it did. The bulk of the English deistic literature was printed before the printing of the French had begun! French MSS. would reach German princes, but not German pastors. But Tholuck sadly avows that the French deism (of the serious and pre-Voltairean portions of which he seems to have known nothing) had a "frightful" influence on the upper classes, though not on the clergy (p. 34). Following him, Kahnis writes (*Internal History*, p. 41) that "English and French Deism met with a very favourable reception in Germany—the latter chiefly in the higher circles, the former rather among the educated middle classes." (He should have added, "the younger theologians.") Baur, even in speaking disparagingly of the French as compared with the English influence, admits (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2te Aufl. p. 347) that the former told upon Germany. Cp. Tennemann, Bohn. tr. pp. 385, 388. Hagenbach shows great ignorance of English deism, but he must have known something of German; and he writes (tr. p. 57) that "the imported deism," both English and French, "soon swept through the rifts of the Church, and gained supreme control of literature." Cp. pp. 67-68. See Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 225-26, as to the persistence of a succession of Hobbes and Locke in Germany in the teeth of the Wolffian school, which soon lost ground after 1740. It is further noteworthy that Brucker's copious *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* (1742-44), which as a mere learned record has great merit, and was long the standard authority in Germany, gives great praise to Locke and little space to Wolff. (See Enfield's abstract, pp. 614, 619 sq.) The Wolffian philosophy, too, had been rejected and disparaged by both Herder and Kant—who were alike deeply influenced by Rousseau—in the



third quarter of the century; and was generally discredited, save in the schools, when Kant produced the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See below, pp. 337, 345.

13. Frederick, though reputed a Voltairean freethinker *par excellence*, may be claimed for Germany as partly a product of the rationalizing philosophy of Wolff. In his first letter to Voltaire, written in 1736, four years before his accession, he promises to send him a translation he has had made of the "accusation and the justification" of Wolff, "the most celebrated philosopher of our days, who, for having carried light into the darkest places of metaphysics, and for having treated the most difficult matters in a manner no less elevated than precise and clear, is cruelly accused of irreligion and atheism"; and he speaks of getting translated Wolff's *Treatise of God, the Soul, and the World*. When he became a thoroughgoing freethinker is not clear, for Voltaire at this time had produced no explicit anti-Christian propaganda. At first the new king showed himself disposed to act on the old maxim that freethought is bad for the common people. In 1743-44 he caused to be suppressed two German treatises by one Gebhardi, a contributor to Gottsched's magazines, attacking the Biblical miracles; and in 1748 he sent a young man named Rüdiger to Spandau for six months' confinement for printing an anti-Christian work by one Dr. Pott.<sup>1</sup> But as he grew more confident in his own methods he extended to men of his own way of thinking the toleration he allowed to all religionists, save insofar as he vetoed the mutual vituperation of the sects, and such proselytizing as tended to create strife. With an even hand he protected Catholics, Greek Christians, and Unitarians, letting them have churches where they would;<sup>2</sup> and when, after the battle of Striegau, a body of Protestant peasantry asked his permission to slay all the Catholics they could find, he answered with the gospel precept, "Love your enemies."<sup>3</sup>

Beyond the toleration of all forms of religion, however, he never went; though he himself added to the literature of deism. Apart from his verses we have from him the posthumous treatise *Pensées sur la Religion*, probably written early in his life, where the rational case against the concepts of revelation and of miracles is put with a calm and sustained force. Like the rest, he is uncritical in his deism; but, that granted, his reasoning is unanswerable. In talk he was wont to treat the clergy with small respect;<sup>4</sup> and he wrote

<sup>1</sup> Schlosser, *Hist. of Eighteenth Cent.*, Eng. tr. 1843, i, 150; Hagenbach, tr. p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Hagenbach, tr. p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 232.

<sup>4</sup> Kahnis, p. 43; Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 34.

more denunciatory things concerning them than almost any freethinker of the century.<sup>1</sup> Bayle, Voltaire, and Lucretius were his favourite studies; and as the then crude German literature had no attraction for him, he drew to his court many distinguished Frenchmen, including La Mettrie, Maupertuis, D'Alembert, D'Argens, and above all Voltaire, between whom and him there was an incurable incompatibility of temper and character, and a persistent attraction of force of mind, which left them admiring without respecting each other, and unable to abstain from mutual vituperation. Under Frederick's vigorous rule all speech was free save such as he considered personally offensive, as Voltaire's attack on Maupertuis; and after a stormy reign he could say, when asked by Prince William of Brunswick whether he did not think religion one of the best supports of a king's authority, "I find order and the laws sufficient. .... Depend upon it, countries have been admirably governed when your religion had no existence."<sup>2</sup> Religion certainly had no part in his personality in the ordinary sense of the term. Voltaire was wont to impute to him atheism; when La Mettrie died, the mocker, then at Frederick's court, remarked that the post of his majesty's atheist was vacant, but happily the Abbé de Prades was there to fill it. In effect, Frederick professed Voltaire's own deism; but of all the deists of the time he had least of the religious temperament and most of sheer cynicism.

The attempt of Carlyle to exhibit Frederick as a practical believer is a flagrant instance of that writer's subjective method. He tells (*Hist. of Friedrich*, bk. xviii, ch. x) that at the beginning of the battle of Leuthen a column of troops near the king sang a hymn of duty (which Carlyle calls "the sound of Psalms"); that an officer asked whether the singing should be stopped, and that the king said "By no means." His "hard heart seems to have been touched by it. Indeed, there is in him, in those grim days, a tone (!) as of trust in the Eternal, as of real religious piety and faith, scarcely noticeable elsewhere in his history. His religion—and *he had in withered forms a good deal of it, if we will look well*—being almost always in a strictly voiceless state, nay, ultra voiceless, or voiced the wrong way, as is too well known." Then comes the assertion that "a moment after" the king said "*to someone, Ziethen probably, 'With men*

<sup>1</sup> See the extracts of Büchner, *Zwei gekrönte Freidenker*, 1890, pp. 45-47.

<sup>2</sup> Thiébaud, *Mes Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, i, 126-28. See i, 355-56, ii, 78-82, as to the baselessness of the stories (e.g., Pusey, *Hist. Inq. into Ger. Rationalism*, p. 123) that Frederick changed his views in old age. Thiébaud, a strict Catholic, is emphatic in his negation: "The persons who assert that [his principles] became more religious..... have either lied or been themselves mistaken." Carlyle naturally detests Thiébaud. The rumour may have arisen out of the fact that in his *Examen critique du Système de la Nature* Frederick counter-argues d'Holbach's impeachment of Christianity. The attack on kings gave him a fellow-feeling with the Church.



like these, don't you think I shall have victory this day!" Here, with the very spirit of unveracity at work before his eyes, Carlyle plumps for the fable. Yet the story, even if true, would give no proof whatever of religious belief.

In point of fact, Frederick was a much less "religious" deist than Voltaire. He erected no temple to his unloved God. And a perusal of his dialogue of Pompadour and the Virgin (*Dialogues des morts*) may serve to dispose of the thesis that the German mind dealt reverently and decently with matters which the French mind handled frivolously. That performance outgoes in ribaldry anything of the age in French.

As the first modern freethinking king, Frederick is something of a test case. Son of a man of narrow mind and odious character, he was himself no admirable type, being neither benevolent nor considerate, neither truthful nor generous; and in international politics, after writing in his youth a treatise in censure of Machiavelli, he played the old game of unscrupulous aggression. Yet he was not only the most competent, but, as regards home administration, the most conscientious king of his time. To find him a rival we must go back to the pagan Antonines and Julian, or at least to St. Louis of France, who, however, was rather worsened than bettered by his creed.<sup>1</sup> Henri IV of France, who rivalled him in sagacity and greatly excelled him in human kindness, was far his inferior in devotion to duty.

The effect of Frederick's training is seen in his final attitude to the advanced criticism of the school of d'Holbach, which assailed governments and creeds with the same unsparing severity of logic and moral reprobation. Stung by the uncompromising attack, Frederick retorts by censuring the rashness which would plunge nations into civil strife because kings miscarry where no human wisdom could avoid miscarriage. He who had wantonly plunged all Germany into a hell of war for his sole ambition, bringing myriads to misery, thousands to violent death, and hundreds of his own soldiers to suicide, could be virtuously indignant at the irresponsible audacity of writers who indicted the whole existing system for its imbecility and injustice. But he did reason on the criticism; he did ponder it; he did feel bound to meet argument with argument; and he left his arguments to the world. The advance on previous regal practice is noteworthy: the whole problem of politics is at once brought to the test of judgment and persuasion. Beside the Christian Georges and the Louis's of his century, and beside his Christian father, his superiority in

<sup>1</sup> Cp. the argument of Faure, *Hist. de Saint Louis*, 1866, i, 242-43; ii, 597.

judgment and even in some essential points of character is signal. Such was the great deist king of the deist age; a deist of the least religious temper and of no very fine moral material to begin with.

The one contemporary monarch who in any way compares with him in enlightenment, Joseph II of Austria, belonged to the same school. The main charge against Frederick as a ruler is that he did not act up to the ideals of the school of Voltaire. In reply to the demand of the French deists for an abolition of all superstitious teaching, he observed that among the 16,000,000 inhabitants of France at most 200,000 were capable of philosophic views, and that the remaining 15,800,000 were held to their opinions by "insurmountable obstacles."<sup>1</sup> This, however, had been said by the deists themselves (e.g., d'Holbach, préf. to *Christianisme dévoilé*); and such an answer meant that he had no idea of so spreading instruction that all men should have a chance of reaching rational beliefs. This attitude was his inheritance from the past. Yet it was under him that Prussia began to figure as a first-rate culture force in Europe.

14. The social vogue of deistic thought could now be traced in much of the German *belles-lettres* of the time. The young JAKOB VON MAUVILLON (1743-1794), secretary of the King of Poland and author of several histories, in his youth translated from the Latin into French Holberg's *Voyage of Nicolas Klimius* (1766), which made the tour of Europe, and had a special vogue in Germany. Later in life, besides translating and writing abundantly and intelligently on matters of economic and military science—in the latter of which he had something like expert status—Mauvillon became a pronounced heretic, though careful to keep his propaganda anonymous.

The most systematic dissemination of the new ideas was that carried on in the periodical published by CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH NICOLAI (1733-1811) under the title of *The General German Library* (founded 1765), which began with fifty contributors, and at the height of its power had a hundred and thirty, among them being Lessing, Eberhard, and Moses Mendelssohn. In the period from its start to the year 1792 it ran to 106 volumes; and it has always been more or less bitterly spoken of by later orthodoxy as the great library of that movement. Nicolai, himself an industrious and scholarly writer, produced among many other things a satirical romance famous in its day, the *Life and Opinions of Magister Sebaldu Nothanker*, ridiculing the bigots and persecutors the type of Klotz, the antagonist of Lessing, and some of Nicolai's less

<sup>1</sup> *Examen de l'Essai sur les préjugés*, 1769. See the passage in Lévy-Bruhl, *L'Allemagne depuis Leibniz*, p. 89.



unamiable antagonists,<sup>1</sup> as well as various aspects of the general social and literary life of the time. To Nicolai is fully due the genial tribute paid to him by Heine,<sup>2</sup> were it only for the national service of his "Library." Its many translations from the English and French freethinkers, older and newer, concurred with native work to spread a deistic rationalism, labelled *Aufklärung*, or enlightenment, through the whole middle class of Germany.<sup>3</sup> Native writers in independent works added to the propaganda. ANDREAS RIEM (1749-1807), a Berlin preacher, appointed by Frederick a hospital chaplain,<sup>4</sup> wrote anonymously against priestcraft as no other priest had yet done. "No class of men," he declared, in language perhaps echoed from his king, "has ever been so pernicious to the world as the priesthood. There were laws at all times against murderers and bandits, but not against the assassin in the priestly garb. War was repelled by war, and it came to an end. The war of the priesthood against reason has lasted for thousands of years, and it still goes on without ceasing."<sup>5</sup> GEORG SCHADE (1712-1795), who appears to have been one of the believers in the immortality of animals, and who in 1770 was imprisoned for his opinions in the Danish island of Christiansøe, was no less emphatic, declaring, in a work on Natural Religion on the lines of Tindal (1760), that "all who assert a supernatural religion are godless impostors."<sup>6</sup> Constructive work of great importance, again, was done by J. B. BASEDOW (1723-1790), who early became an active deist, but distinguished himself chiefly as an educational reformer, on the inspiration of Rousseau's *Émile*,<sup>7</sup> setting up a system which "tore education away from the Christian basis,"<sup>8</sup> and becoming in virtue of that one of the most popular writers of his day. It is latterly admitted even by orthodoxy that school education in Germany had in the seventeenth century become a matter of learning by rote, and that such reforms as had been set up in some of the schools of the Pietists had in Basedow's day come to nothing.<sup>9</sup> As Basedow was the first to set up vigorous reforms, it is not too much to call him an instaurator of rational education, whose chief fault was to be too far ahead of his age. This, with the personal flaw of an unamiable habit of wrangling in all companies, caused the failure of his "Philanthropic Institute," established in 1771, on the invitation of

<sup>1</sup> G. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland—Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 63-64. Goethe's blame (*W. und D.*, B. viii) is passed on purely literary grounds.

<sup>3</sup> Hagenbach, tr. pp. 103-104; Cairns, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> This post he left to become secretary of the Academy of Painting.

<sup>5</sup> Cited by Pünjer, i, 545-46.

<sup>6</sup> Hagenbach, tr. pp. 100-103; Saintes, pp. 91-92; Pünjer, p. 536; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 298, 351.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 546.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* i, 294 sq.

the Prince of Dessau, to carry out his educational ideals. Quite a number of other institutions, similarly planned, after his lead, by men of the same way of thinking, as Canope and Salzmann, in the same period, had no better success.

Goethe, who was clearly much impressed by Basedow, and travelled with him, draws a somewhat antagonistic picture of him on retrospect (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. xiv). He accuses him in particular of always obtruding his anti-orthodox opinions; not choosing to admit that religious opinions were being constantly obtruded on Basedow. Praising Lavater for his more amiable nature, Goethe reveals that Lavater was constantly propounding his orthodoxy. Goethe, in fine, was always lenient to pietism, in which he had been brought up, and to which he was wont to make sentimental concessions. He could never forget his courtly duties towards the established convention, and so far played the game of bigotry. Hagenbach notes (i, 298, note), without any deprecation, that after Basedow had published in 1763-1764 his *Philalethie*, a perfectly serious treatise on natural as against revealed religion, one of the many orthodox answers, that by Pastor Goeze, so inflamed against him the people of his native town of Hamburg that he could not show himself there without danger. And this is the man accused of "obtruding his views." Baur is driven, by way of disparagement of Basedow and his school, to censure their self-confidence—precisely the quality which, in religious teachers with whom he agreed, he as a theologian would treat as a mark of superiority. Baur's attack on the moral utilitarianism of the school is still less worthy of him. (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv, 595-96). It reads like an echo of Kahnis (as cited, p. 46 sq.).

Yet another influential deist was JOHANN AUGUST EBERHARD (1739-1809), for a time a preacher at Charlottenburg, but driven out of the Church for the heresy of his *New Apology of Sokrates; or the Final Salvation of the Heathen* (1772).<sup>1</sup> The work in effect placed Sokrates on a level with Jesus,<sup>2</sup> which was blasphemy.<sup>3</sup> But the outcry attracted the attention of Frederick, who made Eberhard a Professor of Philosophy at Halle, where later he opposed the idealism of both Kant and Fichte. Substantially of the same school was the less pronouncedly deistic cleric STEINBART,<sup>4</sup> author of a utilitarian *System of Pure Philosophy, or Christian doctrine of Happiness*, now forgotten, who had been variously influenced by Locke and Voltaire.<sup>5</sup> Among the less heterodox but still rationalizing

<sup>1</sup> The book is remembered in France by reason of Eberhard's amusing mistake of treating as a serious production of the Sorbonne the skit in which Turgot derided the Sorbonne's findings against Marmontel's *Bélisaire*.

<sup>2</sup> Hagenbach, tr. p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Eberhard, however, is respectfully treated by Lessing in his discussion on Leibnitz's view as to eternal punishment.

<sup>4</sup> Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Saintes, pp. 92-93.



clergy of the period were J. J. Spalding, author of a work on *The Utility of the Preacher's Office*, a man of the type labelled "Moderate" in the Scotland of the same period, and as such antipathetic to emotional pietists;<sup>1</sup> and Zollikofer, of the same school—both inferribly influenced by the deism of their day. Considerably more of a rationalist than these was the clergyman W. A. Teller (1734–1804), author of a New Testament Lexicon, who reached a position virtually deistic, and intimated to the Jews of Berlin that he would receive them into his church on their making a deistic profession of faith.<sup>2</sup>

15. If it be true that even the rationalizing defenders of Christianity led men on the whole towards deism,<sup>3</sup> much more must this hold true of the new school who applied rationalistic methods to religious questions in their capacity as theologians. Of this school the founder was JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725–1791), who, trained as a Pietist at Halle, early thought himself into a more critical attitude,<sup>4</sup> albeit remaining a theological teacher. Son of a much-travelled army chaplain, who in his many campaigns had learned much of the world, and in particular seen something of religious frauds in the Catholic countries, Semler started with a critical bias which was cultivated by wide miscellaneous reading from his boyhood onwards. As early as 1750, in his doctoral dissertation defending certain texts against the criticism of Whiston, he set forth the view, developed a century later by Baur, that the early Christian Church contained a Pauline and a Petrine party, mutually hostile. The merit of his research won him a professorship at Halle; and this position he held till his death, despite such heresy as his rejection from the canon of the books of Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Song of Solomon, the two books of Chronicles, and the Apocalypse, in his *Freie Untersuchung des Canons* (1771–1774)—a work apparently inspired by the earlier performance of Richard Simon.<sup>5</sup> His intellectual life was for long a continuous advance, always in the direction of a more rationalistic comprehension of religious history; and he reached, for his day, a remarkably critical

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 348, 363.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, 367; tr. pp. 124–25; Saintes, p. 94; Kahnis, p. 45. Pusey (150–51, note) speaks of Teller and Spalding as belonging, with Nicolai, Mendelssohn, and others, to a "secret institute, whose object was to remodel religion and alter the form of government." This seems to be a fantasy.

<sup>3</sup> So Steffens, cited by Hagenbach, tr. p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> P. Gastrow, *Joh. Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 45. See Pusey, 140–41, note, for Semler's account of the rigid and unreasoning orthodoxy against which he reacted. (Citing Semler's *Lebensschreibung*, ii, 121–61.) Semler, however, records that Baumgarten, one of the theological professors at Halle, would in expansive moods defend theism and make light of theology (*Lebensschreibung*, i, 103). Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, pp. 12, 18. Pusey notes that "many of the principal innovators had been pupils of Baumgarten" (p. 132, citing Niemeyer).

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Dr. G. Karo, *Johann Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 25; Saintes, pp. 129–31.

view of the mythical element in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Not only did he recognize that Genesis must have pre-Mosaic origins, and that such books as the Proverbs and the Psalms were of later date and other origin than those traditionally assigned;<sup>2</sup> his historical sense worked on the whole narrative. Thus he recognized the mythical character of the story of Samson, and was at least on the way towards a scientific handling of the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> But in his period and environment a systematic rationalism was impossible; he was always a "revelation-believing Christian"; his critical intelligence was always divided against itself;<sup>4</sup> and his powers were expended in an immense number of works,<sup>5</sup> which failed to yield any orderly system, while setting up a general stimulus, in despite of their admitted unreadableness.<sup>6</sup>

In his latter days he strongly opposed and condemned the more radical rationalism of his pupil Bahrdt, and of the posthumous work of Reimarus, here exemplifying the common danger of the intellectual life, for critical as well as uncritical minds. After provoking many orthodox men by his own challenges, he is roused to fury alike by the genial rationalism of Bahrdt and by the cold analysis of Reimarus; and his attack on the Wolfenbüttel Fragments published by Lessing is loaded with a vocabulary of abuse such as he had never before employed<sup>7</sup>—a sure sign that he had no scientific hold of his own historical conception. Like the similarly infuriated semi-rational defenders of the historicity of Jesus in our own day, he merely "followed the tactic of exposing the lack of scientific knowledge and theological learning" of the innovating writer. Always temperamentally religious, he died in the evangelical faith. But his own influence in promoting rationalism is now obvious and unquestioned,<sup>8</sup> and he is rightly to be reckoned a main founder of "German rationalism"—that is, academic rationalism on theologico-historical lines<sup>9</sup>—although he always professed to be merely rectifying orthodox conceptions. In the opinion of Pusey "the revival of historical interpretation by Semler became the most extensive instrument of the degradation of Christianity."

Among the other theologians of the time who exercised a similar influence to the Wolfian, TÖLLNER attracts notice by the comparative courage with which, in the words of an orthodox critic, he "raised, as

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Gostwick, p. 51; Pünjer, i, 561.

<sup>2</sup> Karo, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Saintes, p. 132 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Karo, pp. 3, 8, 16, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Over a hundred and seventy in all. Pünjer, i, 560; Gastrow, p. 637.

<sup>6</sup> Karo, pp. 5–6.

<sup>7</sup> Gastrow, p. 223.

<sup>8</sup> Pusey, p. 142; A. S. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 313.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Karo, p. 5 sq.; Stäudlin, cited by Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 39.



much as possible, natural religion to revelation," and, "on the other hand, lowered Scripture to the level of natural light."<sup>1</sup> First he published (1764) *True Reasons why God has not furnished Revelation with evident proofs*,<sup>2</sup> arguing for the modern attenuation of the idea of revelation; then a work on *Divine Inspiration* (1771) in which he explicitly avowed that "God has in no way, either inwardly or outwardly, dictated the sacred books. The writers were the real authors"<sup>3</sup>—a declaration not to be counterbalanced by further generalities about actual divine influence. Later still he published a *Proof that God leads men to salvation even by his revelation in Nature*<sup>4</sup> (1766)—a form of Christianity little removed from deism. Other theologians, such as Ernesti, went far with the tide of illuminism; and when the orthodox Chr. A. Crusius died at Leipzig in 1781, Jean Paul Richter, then a student, wrote that people had become "too much imbued with the spirit of illuminism" to be of his school. "Most, almost all the students," adds Richter, incline to heterodoxy; and of the professor Morus he tells that "wherever he can explain away a miracle, the devil, etc., he does so." Of this order of accommodators, a prominent example was MICHAELIS (1717-1791), whose reduction of the Mosaic legislation to motives of every-day utility is still entertaining.

16. Much more notorious than any other German deist of his time was CARL FRIEDRICH BAHRDT (1741-1792), a kind of raw Teutonic Voltaire, and the most popularly influential German free-thinker of his age. In all he is said to have published a hundred and twenty-six books and tracts,<sup>5</sup> thus approximating to Voltaire in quantity if not in quality. Theological hatred has so pursued him that it is hard to form a fair opinion as to his character; but the record runs that he led a somewhat Bohemian and disorderly life, though a very industrious one. While a preacher in Leipzig in 1768 he first got into trouble—"persecution" by his own account; "disgrace for licentious conduct," by that of his enemies. In any case, he was at this period quite orthodox in his beliefs.<sup>6</sup> That there was no serious disgrace is suggested by the fact that he was appointed Professor of Biblical Antiquities at Erfurt; and soon afterwards, on the recommendation of Semler and Ernesti, at Giessen (1771). While holding that post he published his "modernized" translation of the New Testament, done from the point of view of belief in

<sup>1</sup> Kahnis, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Wahre Gründe warum Gott die Offenbarung nicht mit augenscheinlichen Beweisen versehen hat.*

<sup>3</sup> *Beweis das Gott die Menschen bereits durch seine Offenbarung in der Natur zur Seligkeit führe.*

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Kahnis, pp. 132-36, as to Bahrdt's early morals.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Göttliche Eingebung*, 1771.

<sup>6</sup> Gostwick, p. 53; Pünjer, i, 546, note.

revelation, following it up by his *New Revelations of God in Letters and Tales* (1773), which aroused Protestant hostility. After teaching for a time in a new Swiss "Philanthropin"—an educational institution on Basedow's lines—he obtained a post as a district ecclesiastical superintendent in the principality of Türkheim on the Hardt; whereafter he was enabled to set up a "Philanthropin" of his own in the castle of Heidesheim, near Worms. The second edition of his translation of the New Testament, however, aroused Catholic hostility in the district; the edition was confiscated, and he found it prudent to make a tour in Holland and England, only to receive, on his return, a missive from the imperial consistory declaring him disabled for any spiritual office in the Holy German Empire. Seeking refuge in Halle, he found Semler grown hostile; but made the acquaintance of Eberhard, with the result of abandoning the remains of his orthodox faith. Henceforth he regarded Jesus, albeit with admiration, as simply a great teacher, "like Moses, Confucius, Sokrates, Semler, Luther, and myself";<sup>1</sup> and to this view he gave effect in the third edition of his New Testament translation, which was followed in 1782 by his *Letters on the Bible in Popular Style* (*Volkston*), and in 1784 by his *Completion (Ausführung) of the Plan and Aim of Jesus in Letters* (1784), and his *System of Moral Religion* (1787). More and more fiercely antagonized, he duly retaliated on the clergy in his *Church and Heretic Almanack* (1781); and after for a time keeping a tavern, he got into fresh trouble by printing anonymous satires on the religious edict of 1788, directed against all kinds of heresy,<sup>2</sup> and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in a fortress—a term reduced by the king to one year. Thereafter he ended not very happily his troublous life in Halle in 1792.

The weakest part of Bahrdt's performance is now seen to be his application of the empirical method of the early theological rationalists, who were wont to take every Biblical prodigy as a merely perverted account of an incident which certainly happened. That method—which became identified with the so-called "rationalism" of Germany in that age, and is not yet discarded by rationalizing theologians—is reduced to open absurdity in his hands, as when he makes Moses employ fireworks on Mount Sinai, and Jesus feed the five thousand by stratagem, without miracle. But it was not by such extravagances that he won and kept a hearing throughout his life. It is easy to see on retrospect that the source of his influence as a writer lay above all things in his healthy critical ethic, his own mode of progression being by way of simple common sense and natural

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte seines Lebens*, etc. 1700-91, iv, 119.

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<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 331.



feeling, not of critical research. His first step in rationalism was to ask himself "how Three Persons could be One God"—this while believing devoutly in revelation, miracles, the divinity of Jesus, and the Atonement. Under the influence of a naturalist travelling in his district, he gave up the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, feeling himself "as if new-born" in being freed of what he had learned to see as a "pernicious and damnable error."<sup>1</sup> It was for such writing that he was hated and persecuted, despite his habitual eulogy of Christ as "the greatest and most venerable of mortals." His offence was not against morals, but against theology; and he heightened the offence by his vanity.

Bahrtdt's real power may be inferred from the fury of some of his opponents. "The wretched Bahrtdt" is Dr. Pusey's Christian account of him. Even F. C. Baur is abusive. The American translators of Hagenbach, Messrs. Gage and Stuckenberg, have thought fit to insert in their chapter-heading the phrase "Bahrtdt, the Theodore Parker of Germany." As Hagenbach has spoken of Bahrtdt with special contempt, the intention can be appreciated; but the intended insult may now serve as a certificate of merit to Bahrtdt. Bishop Hurst solemnly affirms that "What Jeffreys is to the judicial history of England, Bahrtdt is to the religious history of German Protestantism. Whatever he touched was disgraced by the vileness of his heart and the Satanic daring of his mind" (*History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 119; ed. 1901, p. 139). This concerning doctrines of a nearly invariable moral soundness, which to-day would be almost universally received with approbation. Pünjer, who cannot at any point indict the doctrines, falls back on the professional device of classing them with the "platitudes" of the *Aufklärung*; and, finding this insufficient to convey a disparaging impression to the general reader, intimates that Bahrtdt, connecting ethic with rational sanitation, "does not shrink from the coarseness of laying down" a rule for bodily health, which Pünjer does not shrink from quoting (pp. 549-50). Finally Bahrtdt is dismissed as "the theological public-house-keeper of Halle." So hard is it for men clerically trained to attain to a manly rectitude in their criticism of anti-clericals. Bahrtdt was a great admirer of the Gospel Jesus; so Cairns (p. 178) takes a lenient view of his life. On that and his doctrine cp. Hagenbach, pp. 107-10; Pünjer, i, 546-50; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 5. Goethe satirized him in a youthful *Prolog*, but speaks of him not unkindly in the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. As a writer he is much above the German average.

17. Alongside of these propagators of popular rationalism stood

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte seines Lebens*, Kap. 22; ii, 223 sq.

a group of companion deists usually considered together—GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING (1729-1781), HERMANN SAMUEL REIMARUS (1694-1768), and MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1729-1786). The last-named, a Jew, "lived entirely in the sphere of deism and of natural religion,"<sup>1</sup> and sought, like the deists in general, to give religion an ethical structure; but he was popular chiefly as a constructive theist and a defender of the doctrine of immortality on non-Christian lines. His *Phædon* (1767), setting forth that view, had a great vogue.<sup>2</sup> One of his more notable teachings was an earnest declaration against any connection between Church and State; but like Locke and Rousseau he so far sank below his own ideals as to agree in arguing for a State enforcement of a profession of belief in a God<sup>3</sup>—a negation of his own plea. With much contemporary popularity, he had no permanent influence; and he seems to have been completely broken-hearted over Jacobi's disclosure of the final pantheism of Lessing, for whom he had a great affection.

See the monograph of Rabbi Schreiber, of Bonn, *Moses Mendelssohn's Verdienste um die deutsche Nation* (Zürich, 1880), pp. 41-42. The strongest claim made for Mendelssohn by Rabbi Schreiber is that he, a Jew, was much more of a German patriot than Goethe, Schiller, or Lessing. Heine, however, pronounces that "As Luther against the Papacy, so Mendelssohn rebelled against the Talmud" (*Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland: Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 65).

LESSING, on the other hand, is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Biblical criticism, as well as of German literature in general. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Lessing became in a considerable measure a rationalist, while constantly resenting, as did Goethe, the treatment of religion in the fashion in which he himself treated non-religious opinions with which he did not agree.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that already in his student days he had become substantially an unbeliever, and that it was on this as well as other grounds that he refused to become a clergyman.<sup>5</sup> Nor was he unready to jeer at

<sup>1</sup> Baur, *Gesch. der chr. Kirche*, iv, 597.

<sup>2</sup> Translated into English in 1789.

<sup>3</sup> Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Abschn. I—*Werke*, 1838, p. 239 (Eng. tr. 1838, pp. 50-51); Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, liv. iv, ch. viii, near end; Locke, as cited above, p. 117. Cp. Bartholmæss, *Hist. crit. des doct. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i, 145; Baur, as last cited.

<sup>4</sup> See his *Werke*, ed. 1866, v, 317—*Aus dem Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, 49ter Brief.

<sup>5</sup> If Lessing's life were sketched in the spirit in which orthodoxy has handled that of Bahrtdt, it could be made unedifying enough. Even Goethe remarks that Lessing "enjoyed himself in a disorderly tavern life" (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. vii); and all that Hagenbach maliciously charges against Basedow in the way of irregularity of study is true of him. On that and other points, usually glossed over, see the sketch in Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, 1830, i, 332-37. All the while, Lessing is an essentially sound-hearted and estimable personality; and he would probably have been the last man to echo the tone of the orthodox towards the personal life of the freethinkers who went further in unbelief than he.



the bigots when they chanced to hate where he was sympathetic.<sup>1</sup> On the side of religious problems, he was primarily and permanently influenced by two such singularly different minds as Bayle<sup>2</sup> and Rousseau, the first appealing to and eliciting his keen critical faculty, the second his warm emotional nature; and he never quite unified the result. From first to last he was a freethinker in the sense that he never admitted any principle of authority, and was steadfastly loyal to the principle of freedom of utterance. He steadily refused to break with his freethinking friend Mylius, and he never sought to raise odium against any more advanced freethinker on the score of his audacity.<sup>3</sup> In his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, indeed, dealing with a German play in which Mohammedanism in general, and one Ismenor in particular, in the time of the Crusades are charged with the sin of persecution, he remarks that "these very Crusades, which in their origin were a political stratagem of the popes, developed into the most inhuman persecutions of which Christian superstition has ever made itself guilty: the true religion had then the most and the bloodiest Ismenors."<sup>4</sup> In his early *Rettungen* (Vindications), again, he defends the dubious Cardan and impersonally argues the *pros* and *cons* of Christianity and Mohammedanism in a fashion possible only to a skeptical mind.<sup>5</sup> And in his youth, as in his last years, he maintained that "there have long been men who disregarded all revealed religions and have yet been good men."<sup>6</sup> In his youth, however, he was more of a Rousseauist than of an intellectual philosopher, setting up a principle of "the heart" against every species of analytic thought, including even that of Leibnitz, which he early championed against the Wolfian adaptation of it.<sup>7</sup> The sound principle that conduct is more important than opinion he was always apt, on the religious side, to strain into the really contrary principle that opinions which often went with good conduct were necessarily to be esteemed. So when the rationalism of the day seriously or otherwise (in Voltairean Berlin it was too apt to be otherwise) assailed the creed of his parents, whom he loved and honoured, sympathy in his case as in Goethe's always predetermined his attitude;<sup>8</sup> and it is not untruly said of him that he did prefer

<sup>1</sup> E.g. his fable *The Bull and the Calf* (*Fabeln*, ii, 5), à propos of the clergy and Bayle.

<sup>2</sup> Sime, *Life of Lessing*, 1877, i, 102.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. his early notice of Diderot's *Lettre sur les Aveugles*. Sime, i, 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Dramaturgie*, Stück 7. <sup>5</sup> Sime, i, 103-109. <sup>6</sup> Sime, i, 73, 107; ii, 253.

<sup>7</sup> In his *Gedanke über die Herrnhuter*, written in 1750. See Adolf Stahr's *Lessing, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 7te Aufl. ii, 183 sq.

<sup>8</sup> Julian Schmidt puts the case sympathetically: "He had learned in his father's house what value the pastoral function may have for the culture of the people. He was *bibelstet*, instructed in the history of his church, Protestant in spirit, full of genuine reverence for Luther, full of high respect for historical Christianity, though on reading the Fathers he could say hard things of the Church." *Gesch. der deutschen Litteratur von Leibnitz bis auf unsere Zeit*, ii (1886), 326.

the orthodox to the heterodox party, like Gibbon, "inasmuch as the balance of learning which attracted his esteem was [then] on that side."<sup>1</sup> We thus find him, about the time when he announces to his father that he had doubted concerning the Christian dogmas,<sup>2</sup> rather nervously proving his essential religiousness by dramatically defending the clergy against the prejudices of popular freethought as represented by his friend Mylius, who for a time ran in Leipzig a journal called the *Freigeist*—not a very advanced organ.<sup>3</sup>

Lessing was in fact, with his versatile genius and his vast reading, a man of moods rather than a systematic thinker, despite his powerful critical faculty; and alike his emotional and his critical side determined his aversion to the attempts of the "rationalizing" clergy to put religion on a common-sense footing. His personal animosity to Voltaire and to Frederick would also influence him; but he repugned even the decorous "rationalism" of the theologians of his own country. When his brother wrote him to the effect that the basis of the current religion was false, and the structure the work of shallow bunglers, he replied that he admitted the falsity of the basis, but not the incompetence of those who built up the system, in which he saw much skill and address. Shallow bunglers, on the other hand, he termed the schemers of the new system of compromise and accommodation.<sup>4</sup> In short, as he avowed in his fragment on Bibliolatry, he was always "pulled this way and that" in his thought on the problem of religion.<sup>5</sup> For himself, he framed (or perhaps adopted)<sup>6</sup> a pseudo-theory of the *Education of the Human Race* (1780), which has served the semi-rationalistic clergy of our own day in good stead; and adapted Rousseau's catching doctrine that the true test of religion lies in feeling and not in argument.<sup>7</sup> Neither doctrine, in short, has a whit more philosophical value than the other "popular philosophy" of the time, and neither was fitted to have much immediate influence; but both pointed a way to the more philosophic apologists of religion, while baulking the orthodox.<sup>8</sup> If all this were more than a piece of defensive strategy, it was no more scientific than the semi-rationalist theology which he condemned. The "education" theorem, on its merits, is indeed a

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, as cited, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Sime, i, 73.

<sup>3</sup> See Lessing's rather crude comedy, *Der Freigeist*, and Sime's *Life*, i, 41-42, 72, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. his letters to his brother of which extracts are given by Sime, ii, 191-92.

<sup>5</sup> Sime, ii, 188.

<sup>6</sup> As to the authorship see Saintes, pp. 101-102; and Sime's *Life of Lessing*, i, 261-62, where the counter-claim is rejected.

<sup>7</sup> *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, aus dem 4ten Beitr.—*Werke*, vi, 142 sq. See also in his *Theologische Streitschriften* the *Axiomata* written against Pastor Goeze. Cp. Schwarz, *Lessing als Theologe*, 1851, pp. 146, 151; and Pusey, as cited, p. 51, note.

<sup>8</sup> Compare the regrets of Pusey (pp. 51, 155), Cairns (p. 195), Hagenbach (pp. 89-97), and Saintes (p. 100).



discreditable paralogism; and only our knowledge of his affectional bias can withhold us from counting it a mystification. On analysis it is found to have no logical content whatever. "Christianity" Lessing made out to be a "universal principle," independent of its pseudo-historical setting; thus giving to the totality of the admittedly false tradition the credit of an ethic which in the terms of the case is simply human, and in all essentials demonstrably pre-Christian. His propaganda of this kind squares ill with his paper on *The Origin of Revealed Religion*, written about 1860. There he professes to hold by a naturalist view of religion. All "positive" or dogmatic creeds he ascribes to the arrangements that men from time to time found it necessary to make as to the means of applying "natural" religion. "Hence all positive and revealed religions are alike true and alike false; alike true, inasmuch as it has everywhere been necessary to come to terms over different things in order to secure agreement and unity in the public religion; alike false, inasmuch as that over which men came to terms does not so much stand close to the essential (*nicht sowohl.....neben dem Wesentlichen besteht*), but rather weakens and oppresses it. The best revealed or positive religion is that which contains the fewest conventional additions to natural religion; that which least limits the effects of natural religion."<sup>1</sup> This is the position of Tindal and the English deists in general; and it seems to have been in this mood that Lessing wrote to Mendelssohn about being able to "help the downfall of the most frightful structure of nonsense only under the pretext of giving it a new foundation."<sup>2</sup> On the historical side, too, he had early convinced himself that Christianity was established and propagated "by entirely natural means"<sup>3</sup>—this before Gibbon. But, fighter as he was, he was not prepared to lay his cards on the table in the society in which he found himself. In his strongest polemic there was always an element of mystification;<sup>4</sup> and his final pantheism was only privately avowed.

It was through a series of outside influences that he went so far, in the open, as he did. Becoming the librarian of the great Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel, the possession of the hereditary Prince (afterwards Duke) of Brunswick, he was led to publish the "Anonymous Fragments" known as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778),

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Lachmann, 1857, xi (2), 248. Sime (ii, 190) mistranslates this passage; and Schmidt (ii, 326) mutilates it by omissions. Fontanes (*Le Christianisme moderne: Étude sur Lessing*, 1867, p. 171) paraphrases it very loosely. <sup>2</sup> Sime, ii, 190.

<sup>3</sup> Stahr, ii, 239; Sime, ii, 189.

<sup>4</sup> See Sime, ii, 222, 233; Stahr, ii, 251. Hettner, an admirer, calls the early *Christianity of Reason* a piece of sophistical dialectic. *Litteraturgeschichte des 18ten Jahrhunderts*, ed. 1872, iii, 588–89.

wherein the methods of the English and French deists are applied with a new severity to both the Old and the New Testament narratives. It is now put beyond doubt that they were the work of REIMARUS,<sup>1</sup> who had in 1755 produced a defence of "Natural Religion"—that is, of the theory of a Providence—against La Mettrie, Maupertuis, and older materialists, which had a great success in its day.<sup>2</sup> At his death, accordingly, Reimarus ranked as an admired defender of theism and of the belief in immortality.<sup>3</sup> He was the son-in-law of the esteemed scholar Fabricius, and was for many years Professor of Oriental Languages in the Hamburg Academy. The famous research which preserves his memory was begun by him at the age of fifty, for his own satisfaction, and was elaborated by him during twenty years, while he silently endured the regimen of the intolerant Lutheranism of his day.<sup>4</sup> As he left the book it was a complete treatise entitled *An Apology for the Rational Worshipper of God*; but his son feared to have it published, though Lessing offered to take the whole risk; and it was only by the help of the daughter, Elise Reimarus,<sup>5</sup> Lessing's friend, that the fragments came to light. As the Berlin censor would not give official permission,<sup>6</sup> Lessing took the course of issuing them piecemeal in a periodical series of selections from the treasures of the Wolfenbüttel Library, which had privilege of publication. The first, *On the Toleration of Deists*, which attracted little notice, appeared in 1774; four more, which made a stir, in 1777; and only in 1778 was "the most audacious of all," *On the Aim of Jesus and his Disciples*,<sup>7</sup> published as a separate book. Collectively they constituted the most serious attack yet made in Germany on the current creed, though their theory of the true manner of the gospel history of course smacks of the pre-scientific period. A generation later, however, they were still "the radical book of the anti-supernaturalists" in Germany.<sup>8</sup>

As against miracles in general, the Resurrection in particular, and Biblical ethics in general, the attack of Reimarus was irresistible, but his historical construction is pre-scientific. The

<sup>1</sup> Stahr, ii, 243. Lessing said the report to this effect was a lie; but this and other mystifications appear to have been by way of fulfilling his promise of secrecy to the Reimarus family. Cairns, pp. 203, 209. Cp. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, note 29.

<sup>2</sup> See it analysed by Bartholmæss, *Hist. crit. des doct. relig. de la philos. moderne*, i, 147–67; and by Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historic Jesus* (trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), 1910.

<sup>3</sup> Gostwick, p. 47; Bartholmæss, i, 166. His book was translated into English (*The Principal Truths of Natural Religion Defended and Illustrated*) in 1766; into Dutch in 1758; in part into French in 1768; and seven editions of the original had appeared by 1798.

<sup>4</sup> Stahr, ii, 241–44.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii, 245.

<sup>6</sup> The statement that, in Lessing's age, "in north Germany men were able to think and write freely" (Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit.*, p. 80) is thus seen to be highly misleading.

<sup>7</sup> *Von dem Zwecke Jesus und seiner Jünger*, Braunschweig, 1778.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *Histor. Survey of German Poetry*, i, 365.



method is, to accept as real occurrences all the non-miraculous episodes, and to explain them by a general theory. Thus the appointment of the seventy apostles—a palpable myth—is taken as a fact, and explained as part of a scheme by Jesus to obtain temporal power; and the scourging of the money-changers from the Temple, improbable enough as it stands, is made still more so by supposing it to be part of a scheme of insurrection. The method further involves charges of calculated fraud against the disciples or evangelists—a historical misconception which Lessing repudiated, albeit not on the right grounds. See the sketch in Cairns, p. 197 sq., which indicates the portions of the treatise produced later by Strauss. Cp. Pünjer, i, 550-57; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 4. Schweitzer (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), in his satisfaction at the agreement of Reimarus with his own conception of an "eschatological" Jesus, occupied with "the last things," gives Reimarus extravagant praise. Strauss rightly notes the weakness of the indictment of Moses as a worker of fraud (*Voltaire*, 2te Ausg. p. 407).

It is but fair to say that Reimarus's fallacy of method, which was the prevailing one in his day, has not yet disappeared from criticism. As we have seen, it was employed by Pomponazzi in the Renaissance (vol. i, p. 377), and reintroduced in the modern period by Connor and Toland. It is still employed by some professed rationalists, as Dr. Conybeare. It has, however, in all likelihood suggested itself spontaneously to many inquirers. In the *Phaedrus* Plato presents it as applied by empirical rationalizers to myths at that time.

Though Lessing at many points oppugned the positions of the *Fragments*, he was led into a fiery controversy over them, in which he was unworthily attacked by, among others, Semler, from whom he had looked for support; and the series was finally stopped by authority. There can now be no doubt that Lessing at heart agreed with Reimarus on most points of negative criticism,<sup>1</sup> but reached a different emotional estimate and attitude. All the greater is the merit of his battle for freedom of thought. Thereafter, as a final check to his opponents, he produced his famous drama *Nathan the Wise*, which embodies Boccaccio's story of *The Three Rings*, and has ever since served as a popular lesson of tolerance in Germany.<sup>2</sup> In the end, he seems to have become, to at least some extent, a pantheist;<sup>3</sup> but he never expounded any coherent and comprehensive

<sup>1</sup> Stahr, ii, 253-54.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Introd. to Willis's trans. of *Nathan*. The play is sometimes attacked as being grossly unfair to Christianity. (E.g. Crouslé, *Lessing*, 1863, p. 206.) The answer to this complaint is given by Sime, ii, 252 sq.

<sup>3</sup> See Cairns, *Appendix*, Note I; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 149-62; Sime, ii, 299-303; and Stahr, ii, 219-30, giving the testimony of Jacobi. Cp. Pünjer, i, 564-85. But Heine laughingly adjures Moses Mendelssohn, who grieved so intensely over Lessing's Spinozism, to rest quiet in his grave: "Thy Lessing was indeed on the way to that terrible error....."

set of opinions,<sup>1</sup> preferring, as he put it in an oft-quoted sentence, the state of search for truth to any consciousness of possessing it.<sup>2</sup>

He left behind him, however, an important fragment, which constituted one of his most important services to national culture—his "*New Hypothesis* concerning the evangelists as merely human writers." He himself thought that he had done nothing "more important or ingenious"<sup>3</sup> of the kind; and though his results were in part unsound and impermanent, he is justly to be credited with the first scientific attempt to deduce the process of composition of the gospels<sup>4</sup> from primary writings by the first Christians. Holding as he did to the authenticity and historicity of the fourth gospel, he cannot be said to have gone very deep; but two generations were to pass before the specialists got any further. Lessing had shown more science and more courage than any other pro-Christian scholar of the time, and, as the orthodox historian of rationalism has it, "Though he did not array himself as a champion of rationalism, he proved himself one of the strongest promoters of its reign."<sup>5</sup>

18. Deism was now as prevalent in educated Germany as in France or England; and, according to a contemporary preacher, "Berliner" was about 1777 a synonym for "rationalist."<sup>6</sup> Wieland, one of the foremost German men of letters of his time, is known to have become a deist of the school of Shaftesbury;<sup>7</sup> and in the leading journal of the day he wrote on the free use of reason in matters of faith.<sup>8</sup> Some acts of persecution by the Church show how far the movement had gone. In 1774 we find a Catholic professor at Mayence, Lorenzo Isenbiehl, deposed and sent back to the seminary for two years on the score of "deficient theological knowledge," because he argued (after Collins) that the text Isaiah vii, 14 applied not to the mother of Jesus but to a contemporary of the prophet; and when, four years later, he published a book on the same thesis,

but the Highest, the Father in Heaven, saved him in time by death. He died a good deist, like thee and Nicolai and Teller and the Universal German Library" (*Zur Gesch. der Rel. und Philos. in Deutschland*, B. ii, near end.—*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 69).

<sup>1</sup> See in Stahr, ii, 184-85, the various characterizations of his indefinite philosophy. Stahr's own account of him as anticipating the moral philosophy of Kant is as overstrained as the others. Gastrow, an admirer, expresses wonder (*Johann Salomo Semler*, p. 188) at the indifference of Lessing to the critical philosophy in general.

<sup>2</sup> Sime, ii, ch. xxix, gives a good survey.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to his brother, Feb., 1778.

<sup>4</sup> Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (the second) *Einleitung*, § 14.

<sup>5</sup> Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 130. "It was a popular belief, as an organ of pious opinion announced to its readers, that at his death the devil came and carried him away like a second Faust." Sime, ii, 330.

<sup>6</sup> Cited by Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 125. Outside Berlin, however, matters went otherwise till late in the century. Kurz tells (*Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, ii, 461 b) that "the indifference of the learned towards native literature was so great that even in the year 1761 Abbt could write that in Rinteln there was nobody who knew the names of Moses Mendelssohn and Lessing."

<sup>7</sup> Karl Hillebrand, *Lectures on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, p. 109.

<sup>8</sup> *Deutsche Merkur*, Jan. and March, 1788 (*Werke*, ed. 1797, xxix, 1-144: cited by Stäudlin, *Gesch. der Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, p. 233).



in Latin, he was imprisoned. Three years later still, a young Jesuit of Salzburg, named Steinbuhler, was actually condemned to death for writing some satires on Roman Catholic ceremonies, and, though afterwards pardoned, died of the ill-usage he had undergone in prison.<sup>1</sup> It may have been the sense of danger aroused by such persecution that led to the founding, in 1780, of a curious society which combined an element of freethinking Jesuitism with freemasonry, and which included a number of statesmen, noblemen, and professors—Goethe, Herder, and the Duke of Weimar being among its adherents. But it is difficult to take seriously the accounts given of the order.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of rationalism, in any case, was now so prevalent that it began to dominate the work of the more intelligent theologians, to whose consequent illogical attempts to strain out by the most dubious means the supernatural elements from the Bible narratives<sup>3</sup> the name of "rationalism" came to be specially applied,<sup>4</sup> that being the kind of criticism naturally most discussed among the clergy. Taking rise broadly in the work of Semler, reinforced by that of the English and French deists and that of Reimarus, the method led stage by stage to the scientific performance of Strauss and Baur, and the recent "higher criticism" of the Old and New Testaments. Noteworthy at its outset as exhibiting the tendency of official believers to make men, in the words of Lessing, irrational philosophers by way of making them rational Christians,<sup>5</sup> this order of "rationalism" in its intermediate stages belongs rather to the history of Biblical scholarship than to that of freethought, since more radical work was being done by unprofessional writers outside, and deeper problems were raised by the new systems of philosophy. Within the Lutheran pale, however, there were some hardy thinkers. A striking figure of the time, in respect of his courage and thoroughness, is the Lutheran pastor J. H. SCHULZ,<sup>6</sup> who so strongly combated the compromises of the Semler school in regard to the Pentateuch, and argued so plainly for a severance of morals from religion as to bring about his own dismissal (1792).<sup>7</sup> Schulz's

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii, 224.

<sup>2</sup> T. C. Perthes, *Das Deutsche Staatsleben vor der Revolution*, 262 sq., cited by Kahnis pp. 58-59.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 321, 328.

<sup>4</sup> Kant distinguishes explicitly between "rationalists," as thinkers who would not deny the possibility of a revelation, and "naturalists," who did. See the *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. i. This was in fact the standing significance of the term in Germany for a generation.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to his brother, February 2, 1774.

<sup>6</sup> Known as Zopf-Schulz from his wearing a pigtail in the fashion then common among the laity. "An old insolent rationalist," Kurtz calls him (ii, 270).

<sup>7</sup> Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 372; Gostwick, pp. 52, 54.

*Philosophical Meditation on Theology and Religion*<sup>1</sup> (1784) is indeed one of the most pronounced attacks on orthodox religion produced in that age. But it is in itself a purely speculative construction. Following the current historical method, he makes Moses the child of the Egyptian princess, and represents him as imposing on the ignorant Israelites a religion invented by himself, and expressive only of his own passions. Jesus in turn is extolled in the terms common to the freethinkers of the age; but his conception of God is dismissed as chimerical; and Schulz finally rests in the position of Edelmann, that the only rational conception of deity is that of the "sufficient ground of the world," and that on this view no man is an atheist.<sup>2</sup>

Schulz's dismissal appears to have been one of the fruits of the orthodox edict (1788) of the new king, Frederick William II, the brother of Frederick, who succeeded in 1786. It announced him—in reality a "strange compound of lawless debauchery and priest-ridden superstition"<sup>3</sup>—as the champion of religion and the enemy of freethinking; forbade all proselytizing, and menaced with penalties all forms of heresy,<sup>4</sup> while professing to maintain freedom of conscience. The edict seems to have been specially provoked by fresh literature of a pronouncedly freethinking stamp, though it lays stress on the fact that "so many clergymen have the boldness to disseminate the doctrines of the Socinians, Deists, and Naturalists under the name of *Aufklärung*." The work of Schulz would be one of the provocatives, and there were others. In 1785 had appeared the anonymous *Moroccan Letters*,<sup>5</sup> wherein, after the model of the *Persian Letters* and others, the life and creeds of Germany are handled in a quite Voltairean fashion. The writer is evidently familiar with French and English deistic literature, and draws freely on both, making no pretence of systematic treatment. Such writing, quietly turning a disenchanting light of common sense on Scriptural incredibilities and Christian historical scandals, without a trace of polemical zeal, illustrated at once the futility of Kant's claim, in the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, to counteract "freethinking unbelief" by transcendental philosophy. And though the writer is careful to point to the frequent association of Christian fanaticism with regicide, his very explicit appeal for a

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophische Betrachtung über Theologie und Religion überhaupt, und über die Jüdische insonderheit*, 1784.

<sup>2</sup> Pünjer, i, 544-45.

<sup>3</sup> Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. ix, Bohn ed. p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> See the details in Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 368-72; Kahnis, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> *Marokkanische Briefe. Aus dem Arabischen*. Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1785. The Letters purport to be written by one of the Moroccan embassy at Vienna in 1783.



unification of Germany,<sup>1</sup> his account of the German Protestant peasant and labourer as the most dismal figure in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland,<sup>2</sup> and his charge against Germans of degrading their women,<sup>3</sup> would not enlist the favour of the authorities for his work. Within two years (1787) appeared, unsigned, an even more strongly anti-Christian and anti-clerical work, *The In Part Only True System of the Christian Religion*,<sup>4</sup> ascribed to Jakob von Mauvillon,<sup>5</sup> whom we have seen twenty-one years before translating the freethinking romance of Holberg. Beginning his career as a serious publicist by translating Raynal's explosive history of the Indies (7 vols. 1774-78), he had done solid work as a historian and as an economist, and also as an officer in the service of the Duke of Brunswick and a writer on military science. The *True System* is hostile alike to priesthoods and to the accommodating theologians, whose attempt to rationalize Christianity on historical lines it flouts in Lessing's vein as futile. Mauvillon finds unthinkable the idea of a revelation which could not be universal; rejects miracles and prophecies as vain bases for a creed; sums up the New Testament as planless; and pronounces the ethic of Christianity, commonly regarded as its strongest side, the weakest side of all. He sums up, in fact, in a logical whole, the work of the English and French deists.<sup>6</sup> To such propaganda the edict of repression was the official answer. It naturally roused a strong opposition;<sup>7</sup> but though it ultimately failed, through the general breakdown of European despotisms, it was not without injurious effect. The first edict was followed in a few months by one which placed the press and all literature, native and foreign, under censorship. This policy, which was chiefly inspired by the new king's Minister of Religion, Woellner, was followed up in 1791 by the appointment of a committee of three reactionaries—Hermes, Hilmer, and Woltersdorf—who not only saw to the execution of the edicts, but supervised the schools and churches. Such a regimen, aided by the reaction against the Revolution, for a time prevented any open propaganda on the part of men officially placed; and we shall see it hampering and humiliating Kant; but it left the leaven of anti-supernaturalism to work all the more effectively among the increasing crowd of university students.

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe*, xxi.

<sup>2</sup> P. 49.

<sup>3</sup> P. 232.

<sup>4</sup> *Das zum Theil einzige wahre System der christlichen Religion*. It had been composed in its author's youth under the title *False Reasonings of the Christian Religion*; and the MS. was lost through the bankruptcy of a Dutch publisher.

<sup>5</sup> Noack, *Tb.* III, Kap. 9, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> Mauvillon further collaborated with Mirabeau, and became a great admirer of the French Revolution. He left freethinking writings among his remains. They are not described by Noack, and I have been unable to meet with them.

<sup>7</sup> It was a test of the depth of the freethinking spirit in the men of the day. Semler justified the edict; Bahrdt vehemently denounced it. Hagenbach, i, 372.

Many minds of the period, doubtless, are typified by HERDER, who, though a practising clergyman, was clearly a Spinozistic theist, accommodating himself to popular Christianity in a genially latitudinarian spirit.<sup>1</sup> When in his youth he published an essay discussing Genesis as a piece of oriental poetry, not to be treated as science or theology, he evoked an amount of hostility which startled him.<sup>2</sup> Learning his lesson, he was for the future guarded enough to escape persecution. He was led by his own temperamental bias, however, to a transcendental position in philosophy. Originally in agreement with Kant,<sup>3</sup> as against the current metaphysic, in the period before the issue of the latter's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he nourished his religious instincts by a discursive reading of history, which he handled in a comparatively scientific yet above all poetic or theosophic spirit, while Kant, who had little or no interest in history, developed his thought on the side of physical science.<sup>4</sup> The philosophic methods of the two men thus became opposed; and when Herder found Kant's philosophy producing a strongly rationalistic cast of thought among the divinity students who came before him for examination, he directly and sharply antagonized it<sup>5</sup> in a theistic sense. Yet his own influence on his age was on the whole latitudinarian and anti-theological; he opposed to the apriorism of Kant the view that the concepts of space and time are the results of experience and an abstraction of its contents; his historic studies had developed in him a conception of the process of evolution alike in life, opinion, and faculty; and orthodoxy and philosophy alike incline to rank him as a pantheist.<sup>6</sup>

19. Meanwhile, the drift of the age of *Aufklärung* was apparent in the practically freethinking attitude of the two foremost men of letters in the new Germany—GOETHE and SCHILLER. Of the former, despite the bluster of Carlyle, and despite the æsthetic favour shown to Christianity in *Wilhelm Meister*, no religious ingenuity can make more than a pantheist,<sup>7</sup> who, insofar as he

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, iii, 48; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 328; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 162-68. Bishop Hurst laments (*Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 145) that Herder's early views as to the mission of Christ "were, in common with many other evangelical views, doomed to an unhappy obscuration upon the advance of his later years by frequent intercourse with more skeptical minds."

<sup>2</sup> On the clerical opposition to him at Weimar on this score see Düntzer, *Life of Goethe*, Eng. tr. 1883, i, 317.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie nach ihrem Entwicklungsgang*, 1889.

<sup>4</sup> Kronenberg, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, 1882, pp. 381-87; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, pp. 91, 103.

<sup>6</sup> Kahnis, p. 78, and Erdmann, as there cited. Erdmann finds the pantheism of Herder to be, not Spinozistic as he supposed, but akin to that of Bruno and his Italian successors.

<sup>7</sup> The chief sample passages in his works are the poem *Das Göttliche* and the speech of Faust in reply to Gretchen in the garden scene. It was the surmised pantheism of Goethe's poem *Prometheus* that, according to Jacobi, drew from Lessing his avowal of a pantheistic leaning. The poem has even an atheistic ring; but we have Goethe's own



touched on Biblical questions, copied the half-grown rationalism of the school of Semler.<sup>1</sup> "The great Pagan" was the common label among his orthodox or conformist contemporaries.<sup>2</sup> As a boy, learning a little Hebrew, he was already at the critical point of view in regard to Biblical marvels,<sup>3</sup> though he never became a scientific critic. He has told how, in his youth, when Lavater insisted that he must choose between orthodox Christianity and atheism, he answered that, if he were not free to be a Christian in his own way (*wie ich es bisher gehegt hätte*), he would as soon turn atheist as Christian, the more so as he saw that nobody knew very well what either signified.<sup>4</sup> As he puts it, he had made a Christ and a Christianity of his own.<sup>5</sup> His admired friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, the "Beautiful Soul" of one of his pieces, told him that he never satisfied her when he used the Christian terminology, which he never seemed to get right; and he tells how he gradually turned away from her religion, which he had for a time approached, in its Moravian aspect, with a too passionate zeal.<sup>6</sup> In his letters to Lavater, he wrote quite explicitly that a voice from heaven would not make him believe in a virgin birth and a resurrection, such tales being for him rather blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in Nature. Thousands of pages of earlier and later writings, he declared, were for him as beautiful as the gospel.<sup>7</sup> Nor did he ever yield to the Christian Church more than a Platonic amity; so that much of the peculiar hostility that was long felt for his poetry and was long shown to his memory in Germany is to be explained as an expression of the normal malice of pietism against unbelievers.<sup>8</sup> Such utterances as the avowal that he revered Jesus as he revered the Sun,<sup>9</sup> and the other to the effect that Christianity has nothing to do with philosophy, where Hegel sought to bring it—that it is simply a beneficent influence, and is not to be looked to for proof of immortality<sup>10</sup>—are clearly not those of a believer. To-day belief is glad to claim Goethe as a friend in respect of his many concessions to it, as well as of his occasional flings at more

account of the influence of Spinoza on him from his youth onwards (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. xiv; Th. IV, B. xvi). See also his remarks on the "natural" religion of "conviction" or rational inference, and that of "faith" (*Glaube*) or revelationism, in B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1886, xi, 134); also Kestner's account of his opinions at twenty-three, in Düntzer's *Life*, Eng. tr. I, 185; and again his letter to Jacobi, January 6, 1813, quoted by Düntzer, ii, 290.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Alt-Testamentliches* Appendix to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*.

<sup>2</sup> Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Phil. in Deutschland* (*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 92).

<sup>3</sup> *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. I, B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1886, xi, 123).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* Th. III, B. xiv, par. 20 (*Werke*, xii, 159). <sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 165, 186.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Compare, as to the hostility he aroused, Düntzer, i, 152, 317, 329-30, 451; ii, 291 note, 455, 461; Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, März 6, 1830; and Heine, last cit. p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> Eckermann, März 11, 1832.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* Feb. 4, 1829.

consistent freethinkers. But a "great pagan" he remains for the student. In the opinion of later orthodoxy his "influence on religion was very pernicious."<sup>1</sup> He indeed showed small concern for religious susceptibilities when he humorously wrote that from his youth up he believed himself to stand so well with his God as to fancy that he might even "have something to forgive Him."<sup>2</sup>

One passage in Goethe's essay on the Pentateuch, appended to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, is worth noting here as illustrating the ability of genius to cherish and propagate historical fallacies. It runs: "The peculiar, unique, and deepest theme of the history of the world and man, to which all others are subordinate, is always the conflict of belief and unbelief. All epochs in which belief rules, under whatever form, are illustrious, inspiring, and fruitful for that time and the future. All epochs, on the other hand, in which unbelief, in whatever form, secures a miserable victory, even though for a moment they may flaunt it proudly, disappear for posterity, because no man willingly troubles himself with knowledge of the unfruitful" (first ed. pp. 424-25). Goethe goes on to speak of the four latter books of Moses as occupied with the theme of unbelief, and of the first as occupied with belief. Thus his formula was based, to begin with, on purely fabulous history, into the nature of which his poetic faculty gave him no true insight. (See his idyllic recast of the patriarchal history in Th. I, B. iv of the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*.) Applied to real history, his formula has no validity save on a definition which implies either an equivocal or an argument in a circle. If it refer, in the natural sense, to epochs in which any given religion is widely rejected and assailed, it is palpably false. The Renaissance and Goethe's own century were ages of such unbelief; and they remain much more deeply interesting than the Ages of Faith. St. Peter's at Rome is the work of a reputedly unbelieving pope. If on the other hand his formula be meant to apply to belief in the sense of energy and enthusiasm, it is still fallacious. The crusades were manifestations of energy and enthusiasm; but they were profoundly "unfruitful," and they are not deeply interesting. The only sense in which Goethe's formula could stand would be one in which it is recognized that all vigorous intellectual life stands for "belief"—that is to say, that Lucretius and Voltaire, Paine and d'Holbach, stand for "belief" when confidently attacking beliefs. The formula is thus true only in a strained and non-natural sense; whereas it is sure to be read and to be believed, by thoughtless admirers, in its natural and false

<sup>1</sup> Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. viii; *Werke*, xi, 334.



sense, though the whole history of Byzantium and modern Islam is a history of stagnant and unfruitful belief, and that of modern Europe a history of fruitful doubt, disbelief, and denial, involving new affirmations. Goethe's own mind on the subject was in a state of verbalizing confusion, the result or expression of his temperamental aversion to clear analytical thought ("Above all," he boasts, "I never thought about thinking") and his habit of poetic allegory and apriorism. "Logic was invincibly repugnant to him" (Lewes, *Life of Goethe*, 3rd ed. p. 38). The mosaic of his thinking is sufficiently indicated in Lewes's sympathetically confused account (*id.* pp. 523-27). Where he himself doubted and denied current creeds, as in his work in natural science, he was most fruitful<sup>1</sup> (though he was not always right—e.g., his polemic against Newton's theory of colour); and the permanently interesting teaching of his *Faust* is precisely that which artistically utters the doubt through which he passed to a pantheistic Naturalism.

20. No less certain is the unbelief of Schiller (1759-1805), whom Hagenbach even takes as "the representative of the rationalism of his age." In his juvenile *Robbers*, indeed, he makes his worst villains freethinkers; and in the preface he stoutly champions religion against all assailants; but hardly ever after that piece does he give a favourable portrait of a priest.<sup>2</sup> He himself soon joined the *Aufklärung*; and all his æsthetic appreciation of Christianity never carried him beyond the position that it virtually had the tendency (*Anlage*) to the highest and noblest, though that was in general tastelessly and repulsively represented by Christians. He added that in a certain sense it is the only æsthetic religion, whence it is that it gives such pleasure to the feminine nature, and that only among women is it to be met with in a tolerable form.<sup>3</sup> Like Goethe, he sought to reduce the Biblical supernatural to the plane of possibility,<sup>4</sup> in the manner of the liberal theologians of the period; and like him he often writes as a deist,<sup>5</sup> though professedly for a time a Kantist. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to say that a healthy nature (which Goethe had said needed no morality, no *Natur-recht*,<sup>6</sup> and no political metaphysic) required neither deity nor immortality to sustain it.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp., however, the estimate of Krause, above, p. 207. Virchow, *Goethe als Naturforscher*, 1861, goes into detail on the biological points, without reaching any general estimate.

<sup>2</sup> Remark by Hagenbach, tr. p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Goethe, August 17, 1795 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 87). The passage is given in Carlyle's essay on Schiller. <sup>4</sup> In *Die Sendung Moses*. <sup>5</sup> See the *Philosophische Briefe*.

<sup>6</sup> Carlyle translates, "No Rights of Man," which was probably the idea.

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Goethe, July 9, 1796 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 188). "It is evident that he was estranged not only from the church but from the fundamental truths of Christianity" (Rev. W. Baur, *Religious Life of Germany*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 22). F. C. Baur has a curious

21. The critical philosophy of IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804) may be said to represent most comprehensively the outcome in German intelligence of the higher freethought of the age, insofar as its results could be at all widely assimilated. In its most truly critical part, the analytic treatment of previous theistic systems in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he is fundamentally anti-theological; the effect of the argument being to negate all previously current proofs of the existence and cognizableness of a "supreme power" or deity. Already the metaphysics of the Leibnitz-Wolff school were discredited;<sup>1</sup> and so far Kant could count on a fair hearing for a system which rejected that of the schools. Certainly he meant his book to be an antidote to the prevailing religious credulity. "Henceforth there were to be no more dreams of ghost-seers, metaphysicians, and enthusiasts."<sup>2</sup> On his own part, however, no doubt in sympathy with the attitude of many of his readers, there followed a species of intuitional reaction. In his short essay *What is Freethinking?* (1784) he defines *Aufklärung* or freethinking as "the advance of men from their self-imputed minority"; and "minority" as the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. "*Sapere aude*; dare to use thine own understanding," he declares to be the motto of freethought: and he dwells on the laziness of spirit which keeps men in the state of minority, letting others do their thinking for them as the doctor prescribes their medicine. In this spirit he justifies the movement of rational criticism while insisting, justly enough, that men have still far to go ere they can reason soundly in all things. If, he observes, "we ask whether we live in an enlightened (*aufgeklärt*) age the answer is, No, but in an age of enlightening (*aufklärung*)."<sup>3</sup> There is still great lack of capacity among men in general to think for themselves, free of leading-strings. "Only slowly can a community (*Publikum*) attain to freethinking." But he repeats that "the age is the age of *aufklärung*, the age of Frederick the Great": and he pays a high tribute to the king who repudiated even the arrogant pretence of "toleration," and alone among monarchs said to his subjects, "Reason as you will; only obey!"

But the element of apprehension gained ground in the aging

page in which he seeks to show that, though Schiller and Goethe cannot be called Christian in a natural sense, the age was not made un-Christian by them to such an extent as is commonly supposed (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 46).

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tieftrunk, as cited by Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 376. In his early essay *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (1766) this attitude is clear. It ends with an admiring quotation from Voltaire's *Candide*.

<sup>3</sup> *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in the *Berliner Monatschrift*, Dec. 1784, rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. i.



freethinker. In 1787 appeared the second edition of the *Critique*, with a preface avowing sympathy with religious as against free-thinking tendencies; and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) he makes an almost avowedly unscientific attempt to restore the reign of theism on a basis of a mere emotional and ethical necessity assumed to exist in human nature—a necessity which he never even attempts to demonstrate. With the magic wand of the Practical Reason, as Heine has it, he reanimated the corpse of theism, which the Theoretic Reason had slain.<sup>1</sup> In this adjustment he was perhaps consciously copying Rousseau, who had greatly influenced him,<sup>2</sup> and whose theism is an avowedly subjectivist predication. But the same attitude to the problem had been substantially adopted by Lessing;<sup>3</sup> and indeed the process is at bottom identical with that of the quasi-skeptics, Pascal, Huet, Berkeley, and the rest, who at once impugn and employ the rational process, reasoning that reason is not reasonable. Kant did but set up the "practical" against the "pure" reason, as other theists before him had set up faith against science, or the "heart" against the "head," and as theists to-day exalt the "will" against "knowledge," the emotional nature against the logical. It is tolerably clear that Kant's motive at this stage was an unphilosophic fear that Naturalism would work moral harm<sup>4</sup>—a fear shared by him with the mass of the average minds of his age.

The same motive and purpose are clearly at work in his treatise on *Religion within the bounds of Pure [i.e. Mere] Reason* (1792–1794), where, while insisting on the purely ethical and rational character of true religion, he painfully elaborates reasons for continuing to use the Bible (concerning which he contends that, in view of its practically "godly" contents, no one can deny the possibility of its being held as a revelation) as "the basis of ecclesiastical instruction" no less than a means of swaying the populace.<sup>5</sup> Miracles, he in effect avows, are not true; still, there must be no carping criticism of the miracle stories, which serve a good end. There is to be no persecution; but there is to be no such open disputation as would provoke it.<sup>6</sup> Again and again, with a visible uneasiness, the writer

<sup>1</sup> For an able argument vindicating the unity of Kant's system, however, see Prof. Adamson, *The Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 21 sq., as against Lange. With the verdict in the text compare that of Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Religi. u. Philos. in Deutschland*, B. iii (*Werke*, as cited, iii, 81–82); that of Prof. G. Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, vol. i, 1905, p. 94 sq.; and that of Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel*, rep. in vol. entitled *The Philosophical Radicals and Other Essays*, 1907, pp. 264, 266.

<sup>2</sup> Stuckenberg, pp. 225, 332.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben..... dargestellt*, 1877, i, 33, 48; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Hagenbach, Eng. tr. p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; Abth. ii (ed. 1793, pp. 145–46, 188–89).

<sup>6</sup> Work cited, Stück ii, Abschn. ii, Allg. Anm. p. 108 sq.

returns to the thesis that even "revealed" religion cannot do without sacred books which are partly untrue.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity he laboriously metamorphosed, as so many had done before him, and as Coleridge and Hegel did after him, into a formula of three *modes* or aspects of the moral deity<sup>2</sup> which his ethical purpose required. And all this divagation from the plain path of Truth is justified in the interest of Goodness.

All the while the book is from beginning to end profoundly divided against itself. It indicates disbelief in every one of the standing Christian dogmas—Creation, Fall, Salvation, Miracles, and the supernatural basis of morals. The first paragraph of the preface insists that morality is founded on the free reason, and that it needs no religion to aid it. Again and again this note is sounded. "The pure religious faith is that alone which can serve as basis for a universal Church; because it is a pure reason-faith, in which everyone can participate."<sup>3</sup> But without the slightest attempt at justification there is thrown in the formula that "no religion is thinkable without belief in a future life."<sup>4</sup> Thus heaven and hell<sup>5</sup> and Bible and church are arbitrarily imposed on the "pure religion" for the comfort of unbelieving clergymen and the moralizing of life. Error is to cast out error, and evil, evil.

The process of Kant's adjustment of his philosophy to social needs as he regarded them is to be understood by following the chronology and the vogue of his writings. The first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* "excited little attention" (Stuckenberg, *Life of Kant*, p. 368); but in 1787 appeared the second and modified edition, with a new preface, clearly written with a propitiatory eye to the orthodox reaction. "All at once the work now became popular, and the praise was as loud and as fulsome as at first the silence had been profound. The literature of the day began to teem with Kantian ideas, with discussions of the new philosophy, and with the praises of its author..... High officials in Berlin would lay aside the weighty affairs of State to consider the *Kritik*, and among them were found warm admirers of the work and its author." *Id.* p. 369. Cp. Heine, *Rel. und Phil. in Deutschland*, B. iii—*Werke*, iii, 75, 82.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Stück iv, Th. i, preamble (p. 221, ed. cited).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* Stück iii, Abth. ii, Allg. Anm.: "This belief," he avows frankly enough, "involves no mystery" (p. 199). In a note to the second edition he suggests that there must be a basis in reason for the idea of a Trinity, found as it is among so many ancient and primitive peoples. The speculation is in itself evasive, for he does not give the slightest reason for thinking the Goths capable of such metaphysic.

<sup>3</sup> Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; pp. 137, 139.

<sup>4</sup> Stück iii, Abth. ii, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Kant explicitly concurs in Warburton's thesis that the Jewish lawgiver purposely omitted all mention of a future state from the Pentateuch; since such belief must be supposed to have been current in Jewry. But he goes further, and pronounces that simple Judaism contains "absolutely no religious belief." To this complexion can philosophic compromise come.



This popularity becomes intelligible in the light of the new edition and its preface. To say nothing of the alterations in the text, pronounced by Schopenhauer to be cowardly accommodations (as to which question see Adamson, as cited, and Stuckenberg, p. 461, note 94), Kant writes in the preface that he had been "obliged to destroy knowledge in order to make room for faith"; and, again, that "only through criticism can the roots be cut of materialism, fatalism, atheism, freethinking unbelief (*freigeisterischen Unglauben*), fanaticism and superstition, which may become universally injurious; also of idealism and skepticism, which are dangerous rather to the Schools, and can hardly reach the general public." (Meiklejohn mistranslates: "which are universally injurious"—Bohn ed. p. xxxvii.) This passage virtually puts the popular religion and all philosophies save Kant's own on one level of moral dubiety. It is, however, distinctly uncandid as regards the "freethinking unbelief," for Kant himself was certainly an unbeliever in Christian miracles and dogmas.

His readiness to make an appeal to prejudice appears again in the second edition of the *Critique* when he asks: "Whence does the freethinker derive his knowledge that there is, for instance, no Supreme Being?" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, *Transc. Methodenlehre*, 1 H. 2 Absch. ed. Kirchmann, 1879, p. 587; Bohn tr. p. 458.) He had just before professed to be dealing with denial of the "existence of God"—a proposition of no significance whatever unless "God" be defined. He now without warning substitutes the still more undefined expression "Supreme Being" for "God," thus imputing a proposition probably never sustained with clear verbal purpose by any human being. Either, then, Kant's own proposition was the entirely vacuous one that nobody can demonstrate the impossibility of an alleged *undefined* existence, or he was virtually asserting that no one can disprove *any* alleged supernatural existence—spirit, demon, Moloch, Krishna, Bel, Siva, Aphrodite, or Isis and Osiris. In the latter case he would be absolutely stultifying his own claim to cut the roots of "superstition" and "fanaticism" as well as of freethinking and materialism; for, if the freethinker cannot disprove Jehovah, neither can the Kantist disprove Allah and Satan; and Kant had no basis for denying, as he did with Spinoza, the existence of ghosts or spirits. From this dilemma Kant's argument cannot be delivered. And as he finally introduces deity as a psychologically and morally necessary regulative idea, howbeit indemonstrable, he leaves every species of superstition exactly where it stood before—every superstition being practically held, as against "freethinking unbelief," on just such a tenure.

If he could thus react against freethinking before 1789, he must needs carry the reaction further after the outbreak of the

French Revolution; and his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1792–1794) is a systematic effort to draw the teeth of the *Aufklärung*, modified only by his resentment of the tyranny of the political authority towards himself. Concerning the age-long opposition between rationalism (*Verstandesaufklärung*) and intuitionism or emotionalism (*Gefühlsphilosophie*), it is claimed by modern transcendentalists that Kant, or Herder, or another, has effected a solution on a plane higher than either. (E.g. Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, 1889, p. 6.) The true solution certainly must account for both points of view—no very difficult matter; but no solution is really attained by either of these writers. Kant alternately stood at the two positions; and his unhistorical mind did not seek to unify them in a study of human evolution. For popular purposes he let pass the assumption that a cosmic emotion is a clue to the nature of the cosmos, as the water-finder's hazel-twigg is said to point to the whereabouts of water. Herder, recognisant of evolution, would not follow out any rational analysis.

All the while, however, Kant's theism was radically irreconcilable with the prevailing religion. As appears from his cordial hostility to the belief in ghosts, he really lacked the religious temperament. "He himself," says a recent biographer, "was too suspicious of the emotions to desire to inspire any enthusiasm with reference to his own heart."<sup>1</sup> This misstates the fact that his "Practical Reason" was but an abstraction of his own emotional predilection; but it remains true that that predilection was nearly free from the commoner forms of pious psychosis; and typical Christians have never found him satisfactory. "From my heart," writes one of his first biographers, "I wish that Kant had not regarded the Christian religion merely as a necessity for the State, or as an institution to be tolerated for the sake of the weak (which now so many, following his example, do even in the pulpit), but had known that which is positive, improving, and blessed in Christianity."<sup>2</sup> He had in fact never kept up any theological study;<sup>3</sup> and his plan of compromise had thus, like those of Spencer and Mill in a later day, a fatal unreality for all men who have discarded theology with a full knowledge of its structure, though it appeals very conveniently to those disposed to retain it as a means of popular influence. All his adaptations, therefore, failed to conciliate the mass of the orthodox; and even after the issue of the second *Critique* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*) he had been the subject of discussion among the reac-

<sup>1</sup> Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kant's*, 1804, cited by Stuckenberg, p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Stuckenberg, pp. 359–60.



tionists.<sup>1</sup> But that *Critique*, and the preface to the second edition of the first, were at bottom only pleas for a revised ethic, Kant's concern with current religion being solely ethical;<sup>2</sup> and the force of that concern led him at length, in what was schemed as a series of magazine articles,<sup>3</sup> to expound his notion of religion in relation to morals. When he did so he aroused a resentment much more energetic than that felt by the older academics against his philosophy. The title of his complete treatise, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, is obviously framed to parry criticism; yet so drastic is its treatment of its problems that the College of Censors at Berlin under the new theological régime vetoed the second part. By the terms of the law as to the censorship, the publisher was entitled to know the reason for the decision; but on his asking for it he was informed that "another instruction was on hand, which the censor followed as his law, but whose contents he refused to make known."<sup>4</sup> Greatly incensed, Kant submitted the rejected article with the rest of his book to the theological faculty of his own university of Königsberg, asking them to decide in which faculty the censorship was properly vested. They referred the decision to the philosophical faculty, which duly proceeded to license the book (1793). As completed, it contained passages markedly hostile to the Church. His opponents in turn were now so enraged that they procured a royal cabinet order (October, 1794) charging him with "distorting and degrading many of the chief and fundamental doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and of Christianity," and ordering all the instructors at the university not to lecture on the book.<sup>5</sup> Such was the reward for a capitulation of philosophy to the philosophic ideals of the police.

Kant, called upon to render an account of his conduct to the Government, formally defended it, but in conclusion decorously said: "I think it safest, in order to obviate the least suspicion in this respect, as your Royal Majesty's most faithful subject, to declare solemnly that henceforth I will refrain altogether from all public discussion of religion, whether natural or revealed, both in lectures and in writings." After the death of Frederick William II (1797) and the accession of Frederick William III, who suspended the edict of 1788, Kant held himself free to speak out again, and published (1798) an essay on "The Strife of the [University] Faculties," wherein he argued that philosophers should be free to discuss all

<sup>1</sup> Stuckenberg, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. F. C. Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 63-66.

<sup>3</sup> The first, on "Radical Evils," appeared in a Berlin monthly in April, 1792, and was then reprinted separately.

<sup>4</sup> Stuckenberg, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup> Ueberweg, ii, 141; Stuckenberg, p. 363.

questions of religion so long as they did not handle Biblical theology as such. The belated protest, however, led to nothing. By this time the philosopher was incapable of further efficient work; and when he died in 1804 the chief manuscript he left, planned as a synthesis of his philosophic teaching, was found to be hopelessly confused.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude, then, in which Kant stood to the reigning religion in his latter years remained fundamentally hostile, from the point of view of believing Christians as distinguished from that of ecclesiastical opportunists. What were for temporizers arguments in defence of didactic deceit, were for sincerer spirits fresh grounds for recoiling from the whole ecclesiastical field. Kant must have made more rebels than compliers by his very doctrine of compliance. Religion was for him essentially ethic; and there is no reconciling the process of propitiation of deity, in the Christian or any other cult, with his express declaration that all attempts to win God's favour save by simple right-living are sheer fetichism.<sup>2</sup> He thus ends practically at the point of view of the deists, whose influence on him in early life is seen in his work on cosmogony.<sup>3</sup> He had, moreover, long ceased to go to church or follow any religious usage, even refusing to attend the services on the installation of a new university rector, save when he himself held the office. At the close of his treatise on religion, after all his anxious accommodations, he becomes almost violent in his repudiations of sacerdotalism and sectarian self-esteem. "He did not like the singing in the churches, and pronounced it mere bawling. In prayer, whether public or private, he had not the least faith; and in his conversation as well as his writings he treated it as a superstition, holding that to address anything unseen would open the way for fanaticism. Not only did he argue against prayer; he also ridiculed it, and declared that a man would be ashamed to be caught by another in the attitude of prayer." One of his maxims was that "To kneel or prostrate himself on the earth, even for the purpose of symbolizing to himself reverence for a heavenly object, is unworthy of man."<sup>4</sup> So too he held that the doctrine of the Trinity had no practical value, and he had a "low opinion" of the Old Testament.

Yet his effort at compromise had carried him to positions which are the negation of some of his own most emphatic ethical teachings. Like Plato, he is finally occupied in discussing the "right fictions"

<sup>1</sup> Stuckenberg, pp. 304-309.

<sup>2</sup> *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Stuckenberg, p. 332; Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited.

<sup>4</sup> Stuckenberg, pp. 340, 346, 354, 468.



for didactic purposes. Swerving from thoroughgoing freethought for fear of moral harm, he ends by sacrificing intellectual morality to what seems to him social security. His doctrine, borrowed from Lessing, of a "conceivable" revelation which told man only what he could find out for himself, is a mere flout to reason. While he carries his "categorical imperative," or *a priori* conception of duty, so extravagantly far as to argue that it is wrong even to tell a falsehood to a would-be murderer in order to mislead him, he approves of the systematic employment of the pulpit function by men who do not believe in the creed they there expound. The priest, with Kant's encouragement, is to "draw all the practical lessons for his congregation from dogmas which he himself cannot subscribe with a full conviction of their truth, but which he can teach, since it is not altogether impossible that truth may be concealed therein," while he remains free as a scholar to write in a contrary sense in his own name. And this doctrine, set forth in the censured work of 1793, is repeated in the moralist's last treatise (1798), wherein he explains that the preacher, when speaking doctrinally, "can put into the passage under consideration his own rational views, whether found there or not." Kant thus ended by reviving for the convenience of churchmen, in a worse form, the medieval principle of a "twofold truth." So little efficacy is there in a transcendental ethic for any of the actual emergencies of life.

On this question compare Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 6; Stück iv, Th. ii, preamble and §§ i, 3, and 4; with the essay *Ueber ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen* (1797), in reply to Constant—rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. ii, and in App. to Rosenkranz's ed. of *Werke*, vii, 295—given by T. K. Abbott in his tr. of the *Critique of Judgment*. See also Stuckenberg, pp. 341-45, and the general comment of Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, 1862, p. 65. "Kant's recognition of Scripture is purely a matter of expedience. The State needs the Bible to control the people; the masses need it in order that they, having weak consciences, may recognize their duty; and the philosopher finds it a convenient vehicle for conveying to the people the faith of reason. Were it rejected it might be difficult, if not impossible, to put in its place another book which would inspire as much confidence." All the while "Kant's principles of course led him to deny that the Bible is authoritative in matters of religion, or that it is of itself a safe guide in morals.....Its value consists in the fact that, owing to the confidence of the people in it, reason can use it to interpret into Scripture its own doctrines, and can thus

make it the means of popularizing rational faith. If anyone imagines that the aim of the interpretation is to obtain the real meaning of Scripture, he is no Kantian on this point" (Stuckenberg, p. 341).

22. The total performance of Kant thus left Germany with a powerful lead on the one hand towards that unbelief in religion which in the last reign had been fashionable, and on the other hand a series of prescriptions for compromise; the monarchy all the while throwing its weight against all innovation in doctrine and practice. In 1799 Fichte is found expressing the utmost alarm at the combination of the European despotisms to "rout out freethought";<sup>1</sup> and so strong did the official reaction become that in the opinion of Heine all the German philosophers and their ideas would have been suppressed by wheel and gallows but for Napoleon,<sup>2</sup> who intervened in the year 1805. The Prussian despotism being thus weakened, what actually happened was an adaptation of Kant's teaching to the needs alike of religion and of rationalism. The religious world was assured by it that, though all previous arguments for theism were philosophically worthless, theism was now safe on the fluid basis of feeling. On the other hand, rationalism alike in ethics and in historical criticism was visibly reinforced on all sides. Herder, as before noted, found divinity students grounding their unbelief on Kant's teaching. Staüdlin begins the preface to his *History and Spirit of Skepticism* (1794) with the remark that "Skepticism begins to be a disease of the age"; and Kant is the last in his list of skeptics. At the close of the century "the number of Kantian theologians was legion," and it was through the Kantian influence that "the various anti-orthodox tendencies which flourished during the period of Illumination were concentrated in Rationalism"<sup>3</sup>—in the tendency, that is, to bring rational criticism to bear alike on history, dogma, and philosophy. Borowski in 1804 complains that "beardless youths and idle babblers" devoid of knowledge "appeal to Kant's views respecting Christianity."<sup>4</sup> These views, as we have seen, were partly accommodating, partly subversive in the extreme. Kant regards Jesus as an edifying ideal of perfect manhood, "belief" in whom as such makes a man acceptable to God, because of following a good model. "While he thus treats the historical account of Jesus as of no significance, except as a shell into which the practical reason puts the kernel, his whole argument tends to destroy faith

<sup>1</sup> Letter of May 22, 1799, reproduced by Heine.

<sup>2</sup> *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Philos. in Deutschland*. *Werke*, as cited, iii, 96, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Stuckenberg, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 357.



in the historic person of Jesus as given in the gospel, treating the account itself as something whose truthfulness it is not worth while to investigate."<sup>1</sup> In point of fact we find his devoted disciple Erhard declaring: "I regard Christian morality as something which has been falsely imputed to Christianity; and the existence of Christ does not at all seem to me to be a probable historical fact"—this while declaring that Kant had given him "the indescribable comfort of being able to call himself openly, and with a good conscience, a Christian."<sup>2</sup>

While therefore a multitude of preachers availed themselves of Kant's philosophic licence to rationalize in the pulpit and out of it as occasion offered, and yet others opposed them only on the score that all divergence from orthodoxy should be avowed, the dissolution of orthodoxy in Germany was rapid and general; and the anti-supernaturalist handling of Scripture, prepared for as we have seen, went on continuously. Even the positive disparagement of Christianity was carried on by Kantian students; and Hamann, dubbed "the Magician of the North" for his alluring exposition of emotional theism, caused one of them, a tutor, to be brought before a clerical consistory for having taught his pupil to throw all specifically Christian doctrines aside. The tutor admitted the charge, and with four others signed a declaration "that neither morality nor sound reason nor public welfare could exist in connection with Christianity."<sup>3</sup> Hamann's own influence was too much a matter of literary talent and caprice to be durable; and recent attempts to re-establish his reputation have evoked the deliberate judgment that he has no permanent importance.<sup>4</sup>

Against the intellectual influence thus set up by Kant there was none in contemporary Germany capable of resistance. Philosophy for the most part went in Kant's direction, having indeed been so tending before his day. Rationalism of a kind had already had a representative in Chr. A. Crusius (1712-1775), who in treatises on logic and metaphysics opposed alike Leibnitz and Wolff, and taught for his own part a kind of Epicureanism, nominally Christianized. To his school belonged Platner (much admired by Jean Paul Richter, his pupil) and Tetens, "the German Locke," who attempted a common-sense answer to Hume. His ideal was a philosophy "at once intelligible and religious, agreeable to God and accessible to the

<sup>1</sup> Stuckenberg, p. 351. "It is only necessary," adds Stuckenberg (p. 468, note 142), "to develop Kant's hints in order to get the views of Strauss in his *Leben Jesu*."

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 375. Erhard stated that Pestalozzi shared his views on Christian ethics.

<sup>3</sup> Stuckenberg, p. 358.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 119; R. Unger, *Hamann und die Aufklärung*, 1911.

people."<sup>1</sup> Platner on the other hand, leaning strongly towards a psychological and anthropological view of human problems,<sup>2</sup> opposed first to atheism<sup>3</sup> and later to Kantian theism<sup>4</sup> a moderate Pyrrhonic skepticism; here following a remarkable lead from the younger Beausobre, who in 1755 had published in French, at Berlin, a treatise entitled *Le Pyrrhonisme Raisonnable*, taking up the position, among others, that while it is hard to prove the existence of God by reason it is impossible to disprove it. This was virtually the position of Kant a generation later; and it is clear that thus early the dogmatic position was discredited.

23. Some philosophic opposition there was to Kant, alike on intuitionist grounds, as in the cases of Hamann and Herder, and on grounds of academic prejudice, as in the case of Kraus; but the more important thinkers who followed him were all as heterodox as he. In particular, JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE (1762-1814), who began in authorship by being a Kantian zealot, gave even greater scandal than the Master had done. Fichte's whole career is a kind of "abstract and brief chronicle" of the movements of thought in Germany during his life. In his boyhood, at the public school of Pforta, we find him and his comrades already influenced by the new currents. "Books imbued with all the spirit of free inquiry were secretly obtained, and, in spite of the strictest prohibitions, great part of the night was spent in their perusal. The works of Wieland, Lessing, and Goethe were positively forbidden; yet they found their way within the walls, and were eagerly studied."<sup>5</sup> In particular, Fichte followed closely the controversy of Lessing with Goeze; and Lessing's lead gave him at once the spirit of freethought, as distinct from any specific opinion. Never a consistent thinker, Fichte in his student and tutorial days is found professing at once determinism and a belief in "Providence," accepting Spinoza and contemplating a village pastorate.<sup>6</sup> But while ready to frame a plea for Christianity on the score of its psychic adaptation to "the sinner," he swerved from the pastorate when it came within sight, declaring that "no purely Christian community now exists."<sup>7</sup> About the age of twenty-eight he became an enthusiastic convert to the Kantian philosophy, especially to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and threw over determinism on what appear to be grounds of empirical utilitarianism, failing to face the philosophical issue. Within a

<sup>1</sup> Bartholmæss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i, 136-40.

<sup>2</sup> In demanding a "history of the human conscience" (*Neue Anthropologie*, 1790) Platner seems to have anticipated the modern scientific approach to religion.

<sup>3</sup> *Gespräche über den Atheismus*, 1781.

<sup>4</sup> *Lehrbuch der Logik und Metaphysik*, 1795.

<sup>5</sup> W. Smith, *Memoir of Fichte*, 2nd ed. p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 12, 13, 20, 23, 25, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* pp. 34-35.



year of his visit to Kant, however, he was writing to a friend that "Kant has only indicated the truth, but neither unfolded nor proved it," and that he himself has "discovered a new principle, from which all philosophy can easily be deduced.....In a couple of years we shall have a philosophy with all the clearness of geometrical demonstration."<sup>1</sup> He had in fact passed, perhaps under Spinoza's influence, to pantheism, from which standpoint he rejected Kant's anti-rational ground for affirming a God not immanent in things, and claimed, as did his contemporaries Schelling and Hegel, to establish theism on rational grounds. Rejecting, further, Kant's reiterated doctrine that religion is ethic, Fichte ultimately insisted that, on the contrary, religion is knowledge, and that "it is only a corrupt society that has to use religion as an impulse to moral action."

But alike in his Kantian youth and later he was definitely anti-revelationist, however much he conformed to clerical prejudice by attacks upon the movement of freethought. In his "wander-years" he writes with vehemence of the "worse than Spanish inquisition" under which the German clergy are compelled to "cringe and dissemble," partly because of lack of ability, partly through economic need.<sup>2</sup> In his *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* ("Essay towards a Critique of all Revelation"), published with some difficulty, Kant helping (1792), he in effect negates the orthodox assumption, and, in the spirit of Kant and Lessing, but with more directness than they had shown, concludes that belief in revelation "is an element, and an important element, in the moral education of humanity, but it is not a final stage for human thought."<sup>3</sup> In Kant's bi-frontal fashion, he had professed<sup>4</sup> to "silence the opponents of positive religion not less than its dogmatical defenders"; but that result did not follow on either side, and ere long, as a professor at Jena, he was being represented as one of the most aggressive of the opponents. Soon after producing his *Critique of all Revelation* he had published anonymously two pamphlets vindicating the spirit as distinguished from the conduct of the French Revolution; and upon a young writer known to harbour such ideas enmity was bound to fall. Soon it took the form of charges of atheism. It does not appear to be true that he ever told his students at Jena: "In five years there will be no more Christian religion: reason is our religion";<sup>5</sup> and it would seem that the first

<sup>1</sup> Smith, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Adamson, *Fichte*, 1881, p. 32; Smith, as cited, pp. 64-65.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Kant, cited by Smith, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Asserted by Stuckenborg, *Life of Kant*, p. 386.

charges of atheism brought against him were purely malicious.<sup>1</sup> But his career henceforth was one of strife and friction, first with the student-blackguardism which had been rife in the German universities ever since the Thirty Years' War, and which he partly subdued; then with the academic authorities and the traditionalists, who, when he began lecturing on Sunday mornings, accused him of attempting to throw over Christianity and set up the worship of reason. He was arraigned before the High Consistory of Weimar and acquitted; but his wife was insulted in the streets of Jena; his house was riotously attacked in the night; and he ceased to reside there. Then, in his *Wissenschaftslehre* ("Doctrine of Knowledge," 1794-95) he came into conflict with the Kantians, with whom his rupture steadily deepened on ethical grounds. Again he was accused of atheism in print; and after a defence in which he retorted the charge on the utilitarian theists he resigned.

In Berlin, where the new king held the old view that the wrongs of the Gods were the Gods' affair, he found harbourage; and sought to put himself right with the religious world by his book *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* ("The Vocation of Man," 1800), wherein he speaks of the Eternal Infinite Will as regulating human reason so far as human reason is right—the old counter-sense and the old evasion. By this book he repelled his rationalistic friends Schelling and the Schlegels; while his religious ally Schleiermacher, who chose another tactic, wrote on it a bitter and contemptuous review, and "could hardly find words strong enough to express his detestation of it."<sup>2</sup> A few years later Fichte was writing no less contemptuously of Schelling; and in his remaining years, though the Napoleonic wars partly brought him into sympathy with his countrymen, from whom he had turned away in angry alienation, he remained a philosophic Ishmael, warring and warred upon all round. He was thus left to figure for posterity as a religionist "for his own hand," who rejected all current religion while angrily dismissing current unbelief as "freethinking chatter."<sup>3</sup> If his philosophy be estimated by its logical content as distinguished from its conflicting verbalisms, it is fundamentally as atheistic as that of Spinoza.<sup>4</sup> That he was conscious of a vital sunderance between his

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 132-33; Adamson, *Fichte*, pp. 50-67; W. Smith, *Memoir of Fichte*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>2</sup> Adamson, pp. 71, 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, 16te Vorles. ed. 1806, pp. 509-510.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the complaints of Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. pp. 136-37, and of Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Bohn ed. p. 72. Fichte's theory, says Coleridge (after praising him as the destroyer of Spinozism), "degenerated into a crude egoismus, a boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature, as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy."



thought and that of the past is made clear by his answer, in 1805, to the complaint that the people had lost their "religious feeling" (*Religiosität*). His retort is that a new religious feeling has taken the place of the old;<sup>1</sup> and that was the position taken up by the generation which swore by him, in the German manner, as the last had sworn by Kant.

But the successive philosophies of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, all rising out of the "Illumination" of the eighteenth century, have been alike impermanent. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of thought than the internecine strife of the systems which insisted on "putting something in the place" of the untenable systems of the past. They have been but so many "toppling spires of cloud." Fichte, like Herder, broke away from the doctrine of Kant; and later became bitterly opposed to that of his former friend Schelling, as did Hegel in his turn. Schleiermacher, hostile to Kant, was still more hostile to Fichte; and Hegel, detesting Schleiermacher<sup>2</sup> and developing Fichte, give rise to schools arrayed against each other, of which the anti-Christian was by far the stronger. All that is permanent in the product of the age of German Rationalism is the fundamental principle upon which it proceeded, the confutation of the dogmas and legends of the past, and the concrete results of the historical, critical, and physical research to which the principle and the confutation led.

24. It is true that the progressive work was not all done by the Rationalists so-called. As always, incoherences in the pioneers led to retorts which made for rectification. One of the errors of bias of the early naturalists, as we have noted, was their tendency to take every religious document as genuine and at bottom trustworthy, provided only that its allegations of miracles were explained away as misinterpretations of natural phenomena. So satisfied were many of them with this inexpensive method that they positively resisted the attempts of supernaturalists, seeking a way out of *their* special dilemma, to rectify the false ascriptions of the documents. Bent solely on one solution, they were oddly blind to evidential considerations which pointed to interpolation, forgery, variety of source, and error of literary tradition; while scholars bent on saving "inspiration" were often ready in some measure for such recognitions. These arrests of insight took place alternately on both sides, in the normal way of intellectual progress by alternate movements.

while his religion consisted in the assumption of a mere *ordo ordinans*, which we were permitted *exoterice* to call God." Heine (as last cited, p. 75) insists that Fichte's Idealism is "more Godless than the crassest Materialism."

<sup>1</sup> *Grundzüge*, as cited, p. 502.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited, p. 280, note.

All the while, it is the same primary force of reason that sets up the alternate pressures, and the secondary pressures are generated by, and are impossible without, the first.

25. The emancipation, too, was limited in area in the German-speaking world. In Austria, despite a certain amount of French culture, the rule of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century was too effective to permit of any intellectual developments. Maria Theresa, who knew too well that the boundless sexual licence against which she fought had nothing to do with innovating ideas, had to issue a special order to permit the importation of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*; and works of more subversive doctrine could not openly pass the frontiers at all. An attempt to bring Lessing to Vienna in 1774, with a view to founding a new literary Academy, collapsed before the opposition; and when Prof. Jahn, of the Vienna University—described as "freethinking, latitudinarian, anti-supernaturalistic"—developed somewhat anti-clerical tendencies in his teaching and writing, he was forced to resign, and died a simple Canon.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Joseph II in his day passed for an unbeliever;<sup>2</sup> but there was no general movement. "Austria, in a time of universal effervescence, produced only musicians, and showed zest only for pleasure."<sup>3</sup> Yet among the music-makers was the German-born BEETHOVEN, the greatest master of his age. Kindred in spirit to Goethe, and much more of a revolutionist than he in all things, Beethoven spent the creative part of his life at Vienna without ceasing to be a freethinker.<sup>4</sup> "Formal religion he apparently had none." He copied out a kind of theistic creed consisting of three ancient formulas: "I am that which is": "I am all that is, that was, that shall be": "He is alone by Himself; and to Him alone do all things owe their being." Beyond this his beliefs did not go. When his friend Moscheles at the end of his arrangement of *Fidelio* wrote: "*Fine*, with God's help," Beethoven added, "O man, help thyself."<sup>5</sup> His reception of the Catholic sacraments *in extremis* was not his act. He had left to mankind a purer and a more lasting gift than either the creeds or the philosophies of his age.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii, 225. Jahn was well in advance of his age in his explanation of Joshua's cosmic miracle as the mistaken literalizing of a flight of poetic phrase. See the passage in his Introduction to the Book of Joshua, cited by Rowland Williams, *The Hebrew Prophets*, ii (1871), 31, note 33.

<sup>2</sup> R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 265-68.

<sup>3</sup> A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, i (1885), p. 458.

<sup>4</sup> See articles on Beethoven by Macfarren in *Dictionary of Universal Biography*, and by Grove in the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

<sup>5</sup> Grove, art. cited, ed. 1904, i, 224.



## CHAPTER XIX

## FREETHOUGHT IN THE REMAINING EUROPEAN STATES

## § 1. Holland

HOLLAND, so notable for relative hospitality to freethinking in the seventeenth century, continued to exhibit it in the eighteenth, though without putting forth much native response. After her desperate wars with Louis XIV, the Dutch State, now monarchically ruled, turned on the intellectual side rather to imitative *belles lettres* than to the problems which had begun to exercise so much of English thought. It was an age of "retrogression and weakness."<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Wolff, *née* Bekker, one of the most famous of the numerous Dutch women-writers of the century (1738-1804), is notable for her religious as well as for her political liberalism;<sup>2</sup> but her main activity was in novel-writing; and there are few other signs of freethinking tendencies in popular Dutch culture. It was impossible, however, that the influences at work in the neighbouring lands should be shut out; and if Holland did not produce innovating books she printed many throughout the century.

In 1708 there was published at Amsterdam a work under the pseudonym of "Juan di Posos," wherein, by way of a relation of imaginary travels, something like atheism was said to be taught; but the pastor Leenhof had in 1703 been accused of atheism for his treatise, *Heaven on Earth*, which was at most Spinozistic.<sup>3</sup> Even as late as 1714 a Spinozist shoemaker, BOOMS, was banished for his writings; but henceforth liberal influences, largely traceable to the works of Bayle, begin to predominate. Welcomed by students everywhere, Bayle must have made powerfully for tolerance and rationalism in his adopted country, which after his time became a centre of culture for the States of northern Europe rather than a source of original works. Holland in the eighteenth century was receptive alike of French and English thought and literature,

<sup>1</sup> Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis der nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 315-16.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, pp. 336-37; Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, as cited, p. lviii.

especially the former;<sup>1</sup> and, besides reprinting many of the French deists' works and translating some of the English, the Dutch cities harboured such heretics as the Italian Alberto Radicati, Count PASSERANO, who, dying at Rotterdam in 1736, left a collection of deistic treatises of a strongly freethinking cast to be posthumously published.

The German traveller Alberti,<sup>2</sup> citing the *London Magazine*, 1732, states that Passerano visited England and published works in English through a translator, Joseph Morgan, and that both were sentenced to imprisonment. This presumably refers to his anonymous *Philosophical Dissertation upon Death*, "by a friend to truth," published in English in 1732.<sup>3</sup> It is a remarkable treatise, being a hardy justification of suicide, "composed for the consolation of the unhappy," from a practically atheistic standpoint. Two years earlier he had published in English, also anonymously, a tract entitled *Christianity set in a True Light, by a Pagan Philosopher newly converted*; and it may be that the startling nature of the second pamphlet elicited a prosecution which included both. The pamphlet of 1730, however, is a eulogy of the ethic of Jesus, who is deistically treated as a simple man, but with all the amenity which the deists usually brought to bear on that theme. Passerano's *Recueil des pièces curieuses sur les matières les plus intéressantes*, published with his name at Rotterdam in 1736,<sup>4</sup> includes a translation of Swift's ironical *Project* concerning babies, and an *Histoire abrégée de la profession sacerdotale*, which was published in a separate English translation.<sup>5</sup> Passerano is noticeable chiefly for the relative thoroughness of his rationalism.<sup>6</sup> In the *Recueil* he speaks of deists and atheists as being the same, those called atheists having always admitted a first cause under the names God, Nature, Eternal Germs, movement, or universal soul.<sup>7</sup>

In 1737 was published in French a small mystification consisting of a *Sermon prêché dans la grande Assemblée des Quakers*

<sup>1</sup> See Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Briefe*, 1752, p. 451.

<sup>3</sup> This is the basis of Pope's reference to "illustrious Passeran" in his *Epilogue to the Satires*, 1738, ii, 124. The Rev. J. Bramstone's satire, *The Man of Taste* (1733), spells the name "Pasaran," whence may be inferred the extent of the satirist's knowledge of his topic.

<sup>4</sup> Reprinted, in French, at London in 1749, in a more complete and correct edition, published by J. Brindley.

<sup>5</sup> The copy in the British Museum is dated 1737, and the title-page describes Passerano as "a Piemontese exile now in Holland, a Christian Freethinker." It is presumably a re-issue.

<sup>6</sup> Warburton in a note on Pope (*Epilogue*, as cited) characteristically alleges that Passerano had been banished from Piedmont "for his impieties, and lived in the utmost misery, yet feared to practise his own precepts; and at last died a penitent." The source of these allegations may serve as warrant for disbelieving them. Warburton, it will be observed, says nothing of an imprisonment in England.

<sup>7</sup> London ed. 1749, pp. 24-25.



*de Londres, par le fameux Frère E. E., and another little tract, La Religion Muhamedane comparée à la païenne de l'Indostan, par Ali-Ebn-Omar.* "E. E." stood for Edward Elwall, a well-known Unitarian of the time, who, as we saw, was tried at Stafford Assizes in 1726 for publishing a Unitarian treatise, and who in 1742 published another, entitled *The Supernatural Incarnation of Jesus Christ proved to be false.....and that our Lord Jesus Christ was the real son of Joseph and Mary.* The two tracts are both by Passerano, and are on deistic lines, the text of the *Sermon* being (in English) "The Religion of the Gospel is the true Original Religion of Reason and Nature." The proposition is of course purely ethical in its bearing.

The currency given in Holland to such literature tells of growing liberality of thought as well as of political freedom. But the conditions were not favourable to such general literary activity as prevailed in the larger States, though good work was done in medicine and the natural sciences. Not till the nineteenth century did Dutch scholars again give a lead to Europe in religious thought.

## § 2. The Scandinavian States

1. Traces of new rationalistic life are to be seen in the Scandinavian countries at least as early as the times of Descartes. There, as elsewhere, the Reformation had been substantially a fiscal or economic revolution, proceeding on various lines. In Denmark the movement, favoured by the king, began among the people; the nobility rapidly following, to their own great profit; and finally Christian III, who ruled both Denmark and Norway, acting with the nobles, suppressed Catholic worship, and confiscated to the crown the "castles, fortresses, and vast domains of the prelates."<sup>1</sup> In Sweden the king, Gustavus Vasa, took the initiative, moved by sore need of funds, and a thoroughly anti-ecclesiastical temper,<sup>2</sup> the clergy having supported the Danish rule which he threw off. The burghers and peasants promptly joined him against the clergy and nobles, enabling him to confiscate the bishops' castles and estates, as was done in Denmark; and he finally secured himself with the nobles by letting them reclaim lands granted by their ancestors to monasteries.<sup>3</sup> His anti-feudal reforms having stimulated new life in many ways, further evolution followed.

In Sweden the stimulative reign of Gustavus Vasa was followed

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Histor. View of the European Nations*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 103. Cp. Crichton and Wheaton, *Scandinavia*, 1837, i. 383-96; Otté, *Scandinavian History*, 1874, pp. 222-24; Villiers, *Essay on the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1836, p. 105. But cp. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. i. 298-300.

<sup>2</sup> Otté, pp. 232-36; Crichton-Wheaton, i. 398-400; Geijer, *Hist. of the Swedes*, Eng. tr. i. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Koch, p. 104; Geijer, i. 129.

by a long period of the strife which everywhere trod on the heels of the Reformation. The second successor of Gustavus, his son John, had married a daughter of the Catholic Sigismund of Poland, and sought to restore her religion to power, causing much turmoil until her death, whereafter he abandoned the cause. His Catholic son Sigismund recklessly renewed the effort, and was deposed in consequence; John's brother Charles becoming king. In Denmark, meanwhile, Frederick II (d. 1588) had been a bigoted champion of Lutheranism, expelling a professor of Calvinistic leanings on the Eucharist, and refusing a landing to the Calvinists who fled from the Netherlands. On the other hand he patronized and pensioned Tycho Brahé, who, until driven into banishment by a court cabal during the minority of Christian IV, did much for astronomy, though unable to accept Copernicanism.

In 1611 there broke out between Sweden and Denmark the sanguinary two-years' "War of Calmar," their common religion availing nothing to avert strife. Thereafter Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, as Protestant champion in the Thirty Years' War, in succession to Christian IV of Denmark, fills the eye of Europe till his death in 1632; eleven years after which event Sweden and Denmark were again at war. In 1660 the latter country, for lack of goodwill between nobles and commoners, underwent a political revolution whereby its king, whose predecessors had held the crown on an elective tenure, became absolute, and set up a hereditary line. The first result was a marked intellectual stagnation. "Divinity, law, and philosophy were wholly neglected; surgery was practised only by barbers; and when Frederick IV and his queen required medical aid, no native physician could be found to whom it was deemed safe to entrust the cure of the royal patients.....The only name, after Tycho Brahé, of which astronomy can boast, is that of Peter Horrebow, and with him the cultivation of the science became extinct."<sup>1</sup>

2. For long, the only personality making powerfully for culture was HOLBERG,<sup>2</sup> certainly a host in himself. Of all the writers of his age, the only one who can be compared with him in versatility of power is Voltaire, whom he emulated as satirist, dramatist, and historian; but all his dramatic genius could not avail to sustain against the puritanical pietism which then flourished, the Danish

<sup>1</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Holberg, Baron Holberg, born at Bergen, Norway, 1684. After a youth of poverty and struggle he settled at Copenhagen in 1718, as professor of metaphysics, and attained the chair of eloquence in 1720. Made Baron by King Frederick V of Denmark at his accession in 1747. D. 1754.



drama of which he was the fecund creator. After producing a brilliant series of plays (1722-1727) he had to witness the closing of the Copenhagen Theatre, and take to general writing, historical and didactic. In 1741 he produced in Latin his famous *Subterranean Journey of Nicolas Klimius*,<sup>1</sup> one of the most widely famous performances of its age.<sup>2</sup> He knew English, and must have been influenced by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which his story frequently recalls. The hero catastrophically reaches a "subterranean" planet, with another social system, and peopled by moving trees and civilized and socialized animals. With the tree-people, the Potuans, the tale deals at some length, giving a chapter on their religion,<sup>3</sup> after the manner of Tyssot de Patot in *Jacques Massé*. They are simple deists, knowing nothing of Christianity; and the author makes them the mouthpieces of criticisms upon Christian prayers, Te Deums, and hymn-singing in general. They believe in future recompenses, but not in providential government of this life; and at various points they improve upon the current ethic of Christendom.<sup>4</sup>

There is a trace of the tone of Frederick alike in the eulogy of tolerance and in the intimation that anyone who disputes about the character of the deity and the properties of spirits or souls is "condemned to phlebotomy" and to be detained in the general hospital (*nosocomium*).<sup>5</sup> It was probably by way of precaution that in the closing paragraph of the chapter the Potuans are alleged to maintain that, though their creed "seemed mere natural religion, it was all revealed in a book which was sent from the sky some centuries ago"; but the precaution is slight, as they are declared to have practically no dogmas at all. It is thus easy to read between the lines of the declaration of Potuan orthodoxy: "Formerly our ancestors contented themselves to live in natural religion alone; but experience has shown that the mere light of nature does not suffice, and that its precepts are effaced in time by the sloth and negligence of some and the philosophic subtleties of others, so that nothing can arrest freethinking (*libertatem cogitandi*) or keep it within just bounds. Thence came depravation; and therefore it was that God had chosen to give them a written law."<sup>6</sup> Such a confutation of "the error of those who pretend that a revelation is unnecessary" must have given more entertainment to those in

<sup>1</sup> *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum novam telluris theoriam ac historiam quintæ monarchiæ.....exhibens*, etc. Dr. Gosse, in art. HOLBERG, *Encyc. Brit.*, makes the mistake of calling the book a poem. It is in Latin prose, with verse passages.

<sup>2</sup> It was published thrice in Danish, ten times in German, thrice in Swedish, thrice in Dutch, thrice in English, twice in French, twice in Russian, and once in Hungarian.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. vi, *De religione gentis Potuanæ*.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. vi, p. 69; cp. cap. viii, *De Academia*, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. pp. 75-78, ed. 1754.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 77.

question than satisfaction to the defenders of the faith. But a general tone of levity and satire, maintained at the expense of various European nations, England included,<sup>1</sup> together with his popularity as a dramatist, saved Holberg from the imputation of heresy. His satire reached and was realized by the cultured few alone: the multitude was quite unaffected; and during the reign of Christian VI all intellectual efforts beyond the reign of science were subjected to rigorous control.<sup>2</sup> As a culture force, Protestantism had failed in the north lands as completely as Catholicism in the south.

3. In Sweden, meantime, there had occurred some reflex of the intellectual renaissance. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century there are increasing traces of rationalism at the court of the famous Christina, who already in her youth is found much interested in the objections of "Jews, heathens, and philosophers against Christian doctrine";<sup>3</sup> and her invitation of Descartes to her court (1649) implies that Sweden had been not a little affected by the revulsion of popular thought which followed on the Thirty Years' War in Germany. Christina herself, however, was a remarkable personality, unfeminine, strong-willed, with a vigorous but immature intelligence; and she did much of her early skeptical thinking for herself. In the course of a few years, the new spirit had gone so far as to make church-going matter for open scoffing at the Swedish court;<sup>4</sup> and the Queen's adoption of Romanism, for which she prepared by abdicating the crown, appears to have been by way of revulsion from a state of mind approaching atheism, to which she had been led by her freethinking French physician, Bourdelot, after Descartes's death.<sup>5</sup> It has been confidently asserted that she really cared for neither creed, and embraced Catholicism only by way of conformity for social purposes, retaining her freethinking views.<sup>6</sup> It is certain that she was always unhappy in her Swedish surroundings. But her course may more reasonably be explained as that of a mind which could not rest in deism or face atheism, and sought in Catholicism the sense of anchorage which is craved by temperaments ill-framed for the discipline of reason. The author of the *Histoire des intrigues galantes de la reine Christine de Suède* (1697), who seems to have been one of her suite, insists that while she "loved bigots no more than atheists,"<sup>7</sup> and although her religion had been shaken in

<sup>1</sup> He had visited England in his youth.

<sup>2</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. On p. 159 a somewhat contrary statement is made, which obscures the facts. Cp. Schlosser, iv, 13, as to Christian's martinet methods.

<sup>3</sup> Geijer, i, 324.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 343; Otté, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> Geijer, i, 342. Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. tr. ed. 1908, ii, 399; iii, 345-46.

<sup>6</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 88-89, and refs.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Ranke, as cited, ii, 407.



her youth by Bourdelot and other freethinkers, she was regular in all Catholic observances; and that once, looking at the portrait of her father, she said he had failed to provide for the safety of his soul, and thanked God for having guided her aright.<sup>1</sup>

Her annotations of Descartes are of little importance; but it is noteworthy that she accorded to his orthodox adherents a declaration that he had "greatly contributed" to her "glorious conversion" to the Catholic faith.<sup>2</sup> Whatever favour she may have shown to liberty of thought in her youth, no important literary results could follow in the then state of Swedish culture, when the studies at even the new colleges were mainly confined to Latin and theology.<sup>3</sup> The German Pufendorf, indeed, by his treatises *On the Law of Nature and Nations* and *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672-73), did much to establish the utilitarian and naturalistic tendency in ethics which was at work at the same time in England; but his latent deism had no great influence even in Germany, his Scripture-citing orthodoxy countervailing it, although he argued for a separation of Church and State.<sup>4</sup>

4. That there was, however, in eighteenth-century Sweden a considerable amount of unpublished rationalism may be gathered from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, himself something of a free-thinker in his very supernaturalism. His frequent subacid allusions to those who "regarded Nature instead of the divine," and "thought from science,"<sup>5</sup> tell not merely of much passive opposition to his own prophetic claims (which he avenged by much serene malediction and the allotment of bad quarters in the next world), but of reasoned rejection of all Scriptural claims. Thus in his *Sapientia Angelica de Divina Providentia*<sup>6</sup> (1764) he sets himself<sup>7</sup> to deal with a number of the ways in which "the merely natural man confirms himself in favour of Nature against God" and "comes to the conclusion that religion in itself is nothing, but yet that it is necessary because it serves as a restraint." Among the sources of unbelief specified are ethical revolt alike against the Biblical narratives and against the lack of moral government in the world; the recognition of the success of other religions than the Christian, and of the many

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, pp. 288-89. This writer gives the only intelligible account of the private execution of Christina's secretary, Monaldeschi, by her orders. Monaldeschi had either passed over to other hands some of her letters to him, or kept them so carelessly as to let them be stolen. *Id.* p. 11. For her cruel act she shows no trace of religious or any other remorse. She was, in fact, a neurotic egoist. Cp. Ranke, II, 394, 405.

<sup>2</sup> Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.*, i, 449-50. <sup>3</sup> Geijer, i, 342.

<sup>4</sup> See his treatise, *Of the Nature and Qualification of Religion in Reference to Civil Society*, Eng. tr. by Crull, 1698.

<sup>5</sup> *Heaven and Hell*, 1758, §§ 353, 354, 464.

<sup>7</sup> §§ 235-264.

<sup>6</sup> Translated as *The Divine Providence*.

heresies within that; and dissatisfaction with the Christian dogmas. As Swedenborg sojourned much in other countries, he may be describing men other than his countrymen; but it is very unlikely that the larger part of his intercourse with his fellows counted for nothing in this account of contemporary rationalism.

With his odd mixture of scripturalism and innovating dogmatism, Swedenborg disposes of difficulties about Genesis by reducing Adam and Eve to an allegory of the "Most Ancient Church," tranquilly dismissing the orthodox belief by asking, "For who can suppose that the creation of the world could have been as there described?"<sup>1</sup> His own scientific training, which had enabled him to make his notable anticipation of the nebular theory,<sup>2</sup> made it also easy for him to reduce to allegory the text of what he nevertheless insisted on treating as a divine revelation; and his moral sense, active where he felt no perverting resentment of contradiction by reasoners,<sup>3</sup> made him reject the orthodox doctrine of salvation by faith, even as he did the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. On these points he seems to have had a lead from his father, Bishop Jasper Svedberg,<sup>4</sup> as he had in his overwhelming physiological bias to subjective vision-making. But a message which finally amounted to the oracular propounding of a new and bewildering supernaturalism, to be taken on authority like the old, could make for freethought only by rousing rational reaction. It was Swedenborg's destiny to establish, in virtue of his great power of orderly dogmatism, a new supernaturalist and scripturalist sect, while his scientific conceptions were left for other men to develop. In his own country, in his own day, he had little success *qua* prophet, though always esteemed for his character and his high secular competence; and he finally figured rather as a heresiarch than otherwise.<sup>5</sup>

5. According to one of Swedenborg's biographers, the worldliness of most of the Swedish clergy in the middle of the eighteenth century so far outwent even that of the English Church that the laity were left to themselves; while "gentlemen disdained the least taint of religion, and except on formal occasions would have been ashamed to be caught church-going."<sup>6</sup> But this was a matter rather of fashion than of freethought; and there is little trace of

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, § 241.

<sup>2</sup> *De cultu et amore Dei*, 1745, tr. as *The Worship and Love of God*, ed. 1885, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> "When he was contradicted he kept silence." *Documents concerning Swedenborg*, ed. by Dr. Tafel, 1875-1877, ii, 564.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Swedenborg's letter to Beyer, in *Documents*, as cited, ii, 279.

<sup>5</sup> For many years he seldom went to church, being unable to listen peacefully to the trinitarian doctrine he heard there. *Documents*, as cited, ii, 560.

<sup>6</sup> W. White, *Swedenborg: his Life and Writings*, ed. 1867, i, 188.



critical life in the period. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, doubtless, the aristocracies and the cultured class in the Scandinavian States were influenced like the rest of Europe by the spirit of French freethought,<sup>1</sup> which everywhere followed the vogue of the French language and literature. Thus we find Gustavus III of Sweden, an ardent admirer of Voltaire, defending him in company, and proposing in 1770, before the death of his father prevented it, to make a pilgrimage to Ferney.<sup>2</sup> It is without regard to this testimony that Gustavus, who was assassinated, is said to have died "with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian."<sup>3</sup> He was indeed flighty and changeable,<sup>4</sup> and after growing up a Voltairean was turned for a year or two into a credulous mystic, the dupe of pseudo-Swedenborgian charlatans;<sup>5</sup> but there is small sign of religious earnestness in his fashion of making his dying confession.<sup>6</sup> Claiming at an earlier date to believe more than Joseph II, who in his opinion "believed in nothing at all," he makes light of their joint parade of piety at Rome,<sup>7</sup> and seems to have been at bottom a good deal of an indifferentist. During his reign his influence on literature fostered a measure of the spirit of freethought in *belles lettres*; and in the poets J. H. Kjellgren and J. M. Bellman (both d. 1795) there is to be seen the effect of the German *Aufklärung* and the spirit of Voltaire.<sup>8</sup> Their contemporary, Tomas Thoren, who called himself Torild (d. 1812), though more of an innovator in poetic style than in thought, wrote among other things a pamphlet on *The Freedom of the General Intelligence*. But Torild's nickname, "the mad magister," tells of his extravagance; and none of the Swedish belletrists of that age amounted to a European influence. Finally, in the calamitous period which followed on the assassination of Gustavus III, all Swedish culture sank heavily. The desperate energies of Charles XII had left his country half-ruined in 1718; and even while Linnæus and his pupils were building up the modern science of botany in the latter half of the century the economic exhaustion of the people was a check on general culture. The University of Upsala, which at one time had over 2,000 students, counted only some 500 at the close of the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schweitzer, *Geschichte der skandinavischen Literatur*, ii, 175, 225; C.-F. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. ii, 1900-1901; R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 226.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829-1831, vii, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Writing to his mother on his first visit to Paris, he takes her, ostensibly as a *libre esprit*, into his confidence, disparaging Marmontel and Grimm as vain. Joseph II in turn pronounced Gustavus "a conceited fop, an impudent braggart" (Bain, as cited, i, 266). Both monarchs set up an impression of want of balance, and the mother of Gustavus, who forced him to break with her, does the same.

<sup>4</sup> Bain, as cited, i, 224-31.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii, 208-12.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* i, 267-68.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Bain, ii, 272, 287, 293-96.

<sup>9</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 335.

6. In Denmark, on the other hand, the stagnation of nearly a hundred years had been ended at the accession of Frederick V in 1746.<sup>1</sup> National literature, revived by Holberg, was further advanced by the establishment of a society of polite learning in 1763; under Frederick's auspices Danish naturalists and scholars were sent abroad for study; and in particular a literary expedition was sent to Arabia. The European movement of science, in short, had gripped the little kingdom, and the usual intellectual results began to follow, though, as in Catholic Spain, the forces of reaction soon rallied against a movement which had been imposed from above rather than evolved from within.

The most celebrated northern unbeliever of the French period was Count Struensee, who for some years (1770-72) virtually ruled Denmark as the favourite of the young queen, the king being half-witted and worthless. Struensee was an energetic and capable though injudicious reformer: he abolished torture; emancipated the enslaved peasantry; secured toleration for all sects; encouraged the arts and industry; established freedom of the press; and reformed the finances, the police, the law courts, and sanitation.<sup>2</sup> His very reforms, being made with headlong rapidity, made his position untenable, and his enemies soon effected his downfall and death. The young queen, who was not alleged to have been a freethinker, was savagely seized by the hostile faction and put on her trial on a charge of adultery, which being wholly unproved, the aristocratic faction proposed to try her on a charge of drugging her husband. Only by the efforts of the British court was she saved from imprisonment for life in a fortress, and sent to Hanover, where, three years later, she died. She too was a reformer, and it was on that score that she was hated by the nobles.<sup>3</sup> Both she and Struensee, in short, were the victims of a violent political reaction. There is an elaborate account of Struensee's conversion to Christianity in prison by the German Dr. Munter,<sup>4</sup> which makes him out by his own confession an excessive voluptuary. It is an extremely suspicious document, exhibiting strong political bias, and giving Struensee no credit for reforms; the apparent assumption being

<sup>1</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. Cp. pp. 161-63. Schlosser, iv, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 190; Otté, p. 322; C.-F. Allen, as cited, ii, 194-201; Schlosser, iv, 319 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796, Let. xviii. One of the grounds on which the queen was charged with unchastity was, that she had established a hospital for foundlings.

<sup>4</sup> Trans. from the German, 1774; 2nd ed. 1825. See it also in the work, *Converts from Infidelity*, by Andrew Crichton; vols. vi and vii of Constable's Miscellany, 1827. This singular compilation includes lives of Boyle, Bunyan, Haller, and others, who were never "infidels."



that the conversion of a reprobate was of more evidential value than that of a reputable and reflective type.

In spite of the reaction, rationalism persisted among the cultured class. Mary Wollstonecraft, visiting Denmark in 1795, noted that there and in Norway the press was free, and that new French publications were translated and freely discussed. The press had in fact been freed by Struensee, and was left free by his enemies because of the facilities it had given them to attack him.<sup>1</sup> "On the subject of religion," she added, "they are likewise becoming tolerant, at least, and perhaps have advanced a step further in freethinking. One writer has ventured to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, and to question the necessity or utility of the Christian system, without being considered universally as a monster, which would have been the case a few years ago."<sup>2</sup> She likewise noted that there was in Norway very little of the fanaticism she had seen gaining ground, on Wesleyan lines, in England.<sup>3</sup> But though the Danes had "translated many German works on education," they had "not adopted any of their plans"; there were few schools, and those not good. Norway, again, had been kept without a university under Danish rule; and not until one was established at Christiania in 1811 could Norwegian faculty play its part in the intellectual life of Europe. The reaction, accordingly, soon afterwards began to gain head. Already in 1790 "precautionary measures" had been attempted against the press;<sup>4</sup> and, these being found inefficient, an edict was issued in 1799 enforcing penalties against all anonymous writers—a plan which of course struck at the publishers. But the great geographer, Malte-Brun, was exiled, as were Heiberg, the dramatic poet, and others; and again there was "a temporary stagnation in literature," which, however, soon passed away in the nineteenth century. Meantime Sweden and Denmark had alike contributed vitally to the progress of European science; though neither had shared in the work of freethought as against dogma.

### § 3. The Slavonic States

1. In Poland, where, as we saw, Unitarian heresy had spread considerably in the sixteenth century, positive atheism is heard of in 1688–89, when Count LISZINSKI (or Lyszczyński), among whose papers, it was said, had been found the written statement that there is no God, or that man had made God out of nothing, was denounced

<sup>1</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 190–91.  
<sup>2</sup> *Id.* Letter viii, near end.

<sup>3</sup> Work cited, Letter vii.  
<sup>4</sup> Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 324.

by the bishops of Posen and Kioff, tried, and found guilty of denying not only the existence of God but the doctrine of the Trinity and the Virgin Birth. After being tortured, beheaded, and burned, his ashes were scattered from a cannon.<sup>1</sup> The first step was to tear out his tongue, "with which he had been cruel towards God"; the next to burn his hands at a slow fire. It is all told by Zulaski, the leading Inquisitionist.<sup>2</sup> But even had a less murderous treatment been meted out to such heresy, anarchic Poland, ridden by Jesuits, was in no state to develop a rationalistic literature. The old king, John Sobieski, made no attempt to stop the execution, though he is credited with a philosophical habit of mind, and with reprimanding the clergy for not admitting modern philosophy in the universities and schools.<sup>3</sup>

2. In Russia the possibilities of modern freethought emerge only in the seventeenth century, when Muscovy was struggling out of Byzantine barbarism. The late-recovered treasure of ancient folk-poesy, partly preserved by chance among the northern peasantry, tells of the complete rupture wrought in the racial life by the imposition of Byzantine Christianity from the south. As early as the fourteenth century the Strigolniks, who abounded at Novgorod, had held strongly by anti-ecclesiastical doctrines of the Paulician and Lollard type;<sup>4</sup> but orthodox fanaticism ruled life in general down to the age of Peter the Great. In the sixteenth century we find the usual symptom of criticism of the lives of the monks;<sup>5</sup> but the culture was almost wholly ecclesiastical; and in the seventeenth century the effort of the turbulent Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), to correct the corrupt sacred texts and the traditional heterodox practices, was furiously resisted, to the point of a great schism.<sup>6</sup> He himself had violently denounced other innovations, destroying pictures and an organ in the manner of Savonarola; but his own elementary reforms were found intolerable by the orthodox,<sup>7</sup> though they were favoured by Sophia, the able and ambitious sister of

<sup>1</sup> He claimed that the remarks penned by him in an anti-atheistic work, challenging its argument, represented not unbelief but the demand for a better proof, which he undertook to produce. See Krasinski, *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, 1851, pp. 224–25. It is remarkable that the Pope, Innocent XI, bitterly censured the execution.

<sup>2</sup> Fletcher, *History of Poland*, 1831, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Fletcher, pp. 145–46.

<sup>4</sup> Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, pp. 386–87.

<sup>5</sup> L. Sichler, *Hist. de la litt. Russe*, 1887, pp. 88–89, 139. Cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de Russie*, 2e édit. pp. 249, 259, etc. (Eng. tr. i, 309, 321, 328).

<sup>6</sup> R. N. Bain, *The First Romanovs*, 1905, pp. 136–51; Rambaud, p. 333 (tr. i, 414–17). The struggle (1654) elicited old forms of heresy, going back to Manicheism and Gnosticism. In this furious schism Nikon destroyed irregular *ikons* or sacred images; and savage persecutions resulted from his insistence that the faithful should use three fingers instead of two in crossing themselves. Many resisted to the death.

<sup>7</sup> Prince Serge Wolkonsky, *Russian History and Literature*, 1897, pp. 98–101.



Peter.<sup>1</sup> The priest Kriezanitch (1617-1678), who wrote a work on "The Russian Empire in the second half of the Seventeenth Century," denounced researches in physical science as "devilish heresies";<sup>2</sup> and it is on record that scholars were obliged to study in secret and by night for fear of the hostility of the common people. Half-a-century later the orthodox majority seems to have remained convinced of the atheistic tendency of all science;<sup>3</sup> and the friends of the new light doubtless included deists from the first. Not till the reforms of Peter had begun to bear fruit, however, could free-thought raise its head. The great Czar, who promoted printing and literature as he did every other new activity of a practical kind, took the singular step of actually withdrawing writing materials from the monks, whose influence he held to be wholly reactionary.<sup>4</sup> In 1703 appeared the first Russian journal; and in 1724 Peter founded the first Academy of Sciences, enjoining upon it the study of languages and the production of translations. Now began the era of foreign culture and translations from the French.<sup>5</sup> Prince Kantemir, the satirist, who was with the Russian embassy in London in 1733, pronounced England, then at the height of the deistic tide, "the most civilized and enlightened of European nations."<sup>6</sup> The fact that he translated Fontenelle on *The Plurality of Worlds* tells further of his liberalism.<sup>7</sup> Gradually there arose a new secular fiction, under Western influences; and other forms of culture slowly advanced likewise, notably under Elisabeth Petrovna. At length, in the reign of Catherine II, called the Great, French ideas, already heralded by *belles lettres*, found comparatively free headway. She herself was a deist, and a satirist of bigots in her comedies;<sup>8</sup> she accomplished what Peter had planned, the secularization of Church property;<sup>9</sup> and she was long the admiring correspondent of Voltaire, to whom and to D'Alembert and Diderot she offered warm invitations to reside at her court. Diderot alone accepted, and him she specially befriended, buying his library when he was fain to sell it, and constituting him its salaried keeper. In no country, not excepting England, was there more of practical freedom than in Russia under

<sup>1</sup> Morfill, *History of Russia*, 1902, p. 14; Bain, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Turner, *Studies in Russian Literature*, 1882, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 16, 17, 25, 26, 40; Sichler, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup> Sichler, p. 139. Peter's dislike of monks won him the repute of a freethinker. Morfill, p. 97. He was actually attacked as "Antichrist" in a printed pamphlet on the score of his innovations. Personally, he detested religious persecution, and was willing to tolerate anybody but Jews; but he had to let persecution take place; and even to consent to removing statues of pagan deities from his palace. Bain, pp. 304-309.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Bain, p. 392.

<sup>6</sup> Turner, p. 22. Kantemir was the friend of Bolingbroke and Montesquieu in Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Sichler, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> See the passages cited by Rambaud, p. 482, from her letter to Voltaire.

<sup>9</sup> Cp. Wolkonsky, p. 101.

her rule;<sup>1</sup> and if after the outbreak of the Revolution she turned political persecutor, she was still not below the English level. Her half-crazy son Paul II, whom she had given cause to hate her, undid her work wherever he could. But neither her reaction nor his rule could eradicate the movement of thought begun in the educated classes; though in Russia, as in the Scandinavian States, it was not till the nineteenth century that original serious literature flourished.

#### § 4. Italy

1. Returning to Italy, no longer the leader of European thought, but still full of veiled freethinking, we find in the seventeenth century the proof that no amount of such predisposition can countervail thoroughly bad political conditions. Ground down by the matchless misrule of Spain, from which the conspiracy of the monk Campanella vainly sought to free her, and by the kindred tyranny of the papacy, Italy could produce in its educated class, save for the men of science and the students of economics, only triflers, whose unbelief was of a piece with their cynicism. While Naples and the south decayed, mental energy had for a time flourished in Tuscany, where, under the grand dukes from Ferdinando I onwards, industry and commerce had revived; and even after a time of retrogression Ferdinando II encouraged science, now made newly glorious by the names of Galileo and Torricelli. But again there was a relapse; and at the end of the century, under a bigoted duke, Florence was priest-ridden and, at least in outward seeming, gloomily superstitious; while, save for the better conditions secured at Naples under the viceroyalty of the Marquis of Carpi,<sup>2</sup> the rest of Italy was cynically corrupt and intellectually superficial.<sup>3</sup> Even in Naples, of course, enlightenment was restricted to the few. Burnet observes that "there are societies of men at Naples of freer thoughts than can be found in any other place of Italy"; and he admits a general tendency of intelligent Italians to recoil from Christianity by reason of Catholic corruption. But at the same time he insists that, though the laity speak with scorn of the clergy, "yet they are masters of the spirits of the people."<sup>4</sup> Yet it only needed the breathing time and the improved conditions under the Bourbon rule in the eighteenth century to set up a wonderful intellectual revival.

2. First came the great work of VICO, the *Principles of a New*

<sup>1</sup> Seume, *Ueber das Leben.....der Kaiserin Catharina II: Werke*, ed. 1839, v, 239-40; Rambaud, pp. 482-84.

<sup>2</sup> See Bishop Burnet's *Letters*, iv, ed. Rotterdam, 1686, pp. 187-91.

<sup>3</sup> Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, pp. 426-32, 450; Procter, *Hist. of Italy*, 2nd ed. pp. 240, 268.

<sup>4</sup> Burnet, as cited, pp. 195-97.



*Science* (1725), whereof the originality and the depth—qualities in which, despite its incoherences, it on the whole excels Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*—place him among the great freethinkers in philosophy. It was significant of much that Vico's book, while constantly using the vocabulary of faith, grappled with the science of human development in an essentially secular and scientific spirit. This is the note of the whole eighteenth century in Italy.<sup>1</sup> Vico posits Deity and Providence, but proceeds nevertheless to study the laws of civilization inductively from its phenomena. He permanently obscured his case, indeed, by insisting on putting it theologically, and condemning Grotius and others for separating the idea of law from that of religion. Only in a pantheistic sense has Vico's formula any validity; and he never avows a pantheistic view, refusing even to go with Grotius in allowing that Hebrew law was akin to that of other nations. But a rationalistic view, had he put it, would have been barred. The wonder is, in the circumstances, not that he makes so much parade of religion, but that he could venture to undermine so vitally its pretensions, especially after he had found it prudent to renounce the project of annotating the great work of Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, on the score that (as he puts it in his Autobiography) a good Catholic must not endorse a heretic.

Signor Benedetto Croce, in his valuable work on Vico (*The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, Eng. tr. 1913, pp. 89-94), admits that Vico is fundamentally at one with the Naturalists: "Like them, in constructing his science of human society, he excludes with Grotius all idea of God, and with Pufendorf considers man as without help or attention from God, excluding him, that is, from revealed religion and its God." Of Vico's opposition to Grotius, Signor Croce offers two unsatisfactory explanations. First: "Vico's opposition, which he expresses with his accustomed confusion and obscurity, turns.....upon the actual conception of religion.....Religion.....means for Vico not necessarily revelation, but conception of reality." This reduces the defence to a quibble; but finally Signor Croce asks himself "Why—if Vico agreed with the natural-right school in ignoring revelation, and if he instead of it deepened their superficial immanent doctrine—why he put himself forward as their implacable enemy and persisted in boasting loudly before prelates and pontiffs of having formulated a system of natural rights different from that of the three Protestant authors and adapted to the Roman Church." The natural suggestion of "politic caution" Signor Croce rejects,

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Flint, who insists on the deep piety of Vico, notes that he "appears to have had strangely little interest in Christian systematic theology" (*Vico*, 1884, p. 70).

declaring that "the spotless character of Vico entirely precludes it; and we can only suppose that, lacking as his ideas always were in clarity, on this occasion he indulged his tendency to confusion and nourished his illusions, to the extent of conferring upon himself the flattering style and title of *Defensor Ecclesiae* at the very moment when he was destroying the religion of the Church by means of humanity."

It is very doubtful whether this equivocal vindication is more serviceable to Vico's fame than the plain avowal that a writer placed as he was, in the Catholic world of 1720, could not be expected to be straightforward upon such an issue. Vico comported himself towards the Catholic Church very much as Descartes did. His own declaration as to his motives is surely valid as against a formula which combines "spotless character" with a cherished "tendency to confusion." The familiar "tendency to hedge" is a simpler conception.

3. It is noteworthy, indeed, that the "New Science," as Vico boasted, arose in the Catholic and not in the Protestant world. We might say that, genius apart, the reason was that the energy which elsewhere ran to criticism of religion as such had in Catholic Italy to take other channels. By attacking a Protestant position which was really less deeply heterodox than his own, Vico secured Catholic currency for a philosopheme which on its own merits Catholic theologians would have scouted as atheism. As it was, Vico's sociology aroused on the one hand new rationalistic speculation as to the origin of civilization, and on the other orthodox protest on the score of its fundamentally anti-Biblical character. It was thus attacked in 1749 by Damiano Romano, and later by Finetti, a professor at Padua, apropos of the propaganda raised by Vico's followers as to the animal origin of the human race. This began with Vico's disciple, Emmanuele Duni, a professor at Rome, who published a series of sociological essays in 1763. Thenceforth for many years there raged, "under the eyes of Pope and cardinals," an Italian debate between the *Ferini* and *Antiferini*, the affirmers and deniers of the animal origin of man, the latter of course taking up their ground on the Bible, from which Finetti drew twenty-three objections to Vico.<sup>1</sup> Duni found it prudent to declare that he had "no intention of discussing the origin of the world, still less that of the Hebrew nation, but solely that of the Gentile nations"; but even when thus limited the debate set up far-reaching disturbance. At this stage Italian sociology doubtless owed something to Montesquieu and Rousseau; but the fact remains that the *Scienza Nuova* was a

<sup>1</sup> Siciliani, *Sul Rinnovamento della filosofia positiva in Italia*, 1871, pp. 37-41.



book "truly Italian; Italian *par excellence*."<sup>1</sup> It was Vico, too, who led the way in the critical handling of early Roman history, taken up later by Beaufort, and still later by Niebuhr; and it was he who began the scientific analysis of Homer, followed up later by F. A. Wolf.<sup>2</sup> By a fortunate coincidence, the papal chair was held at the middle of the century (1740-1758) by the most learned, tolerant, and judicious of modern popes, Benedict XIV,<sup>3</sup> whose influence was used for political peace in Europe and for toleration in Italy; and whom we shall find, like Clement XIV, on friendly terms with a freethinker. In the same age Muratori and Giannone amassed their unequalled historical learning; and a whole series of Italian writers broke new ground on the field of social science, Italy having led the way in this as formerly in philosophy and physics.<sup>4</sup> The Hanoverian Dr. G. W. Alberti, of Italian descent, writes in 1752 that "Italy is full of atheists";<sup>5</sup> and Grimm, writing in 1765, records that according to capable observers the effect of the French freethinking literature in the past thirty years had been immense, especially in Tuscany.<sup>6</sup>

4. Between 1737 and 1798 may be counted twenty-eight Italian writers on political economy; and among them was one, CESARE BECCARIA, who on another theme produced perhaps the most practically influential single book of the eighteenth century,<sup>7</sup> the treatise on *Crimes and Punishments* (1764), which affected penal methods for the better throughout the whole of Europe. Even were he not known to be a deist, his strictly secular and rationalist method would have brought upon him priestly suspicion; and he had in fact to defend himself against pertinacious and unscrupulous attacks,<sup>8</sup> though he had sought in his book to guard himself by occasionally "veiling the truth in clouds."<sup>9</sup> As we have seen, Beccaria owed his intellectual awakening first to Montesquieu and above all to Helvétius—another testimony to the reformatory virtue of all freethought.

<sup>1</sup> Siciliani, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction (by Mignet?) to the Princess Belgiojoso's tr. *La Science Nouvelle*, 1844, p. cxiii. Cp. Flint, *Vico*, 231.

<sup>3</sup> Ganganelli, *Papst Clemens XIV, seine Briefe und seine Zeit, vom Verfasser des Römischen Briefe* (Von Reumont), 1847, pp. 35-36, and p. 155, note.

<sup>4</sup> See the *Storia della economia pubblica in Italia* of G. Pecchio, 1829, p. 61 sq., as to the claim of Antonio Serra (*Breve trattato*, etc. 1613) to be the pioneer of modern political economy. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii, 164-66. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 122, note) has claimed the title for William Stafford, whose *Compendious or briefe Examination of certain ordinary Complaints* (otherwise called *A Briefe Concept of English Policy*) appeared in 1581. But cp. Ingram (*Hist. of Pol. Econ.* 1888, pp. 43-45) as to the prior claims of Bodin.

<sup>5</sup> *Briefe*, as before cited, p. 408.

<sup>6</sup> *Correspondance littéraire*, ed. 1829-31, vii, 331. Cp. Von Reumont, *Ganganelli*, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> The *Dei delitti e delle pene* was translated into 22 languages. Pecchio, p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> See in the 6th ed. of the *Dei delitti* (Harlem, 1766) the appended *Risposta ad uno scritto*, etc., *Parte prima, Accuse d'empietà*.

<sup>9</sup> See his letter to the Abbé Morellet, cited by Mr. Farrer in ch. i of his ed. of *Crimes and Punishments*, 1880, p. 5. It describes the Milanese as deeply sunk in prejudices.

Of the aforesaid eight-and-twenty writers on economics, probably the majority were freethinkers. Among them, at all events, were Count ALGAROTTI (1712-1764), the distinguished aesthete, one of the group round Frederick at Berlin and author of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* (1737); FILANGIERI, whose work on legislation (put on the *Index* by the papacy) won the high praise of Franklin; the Neapolitan abbatte FERDINANDO GALIANI, one of the brightest and soundest wits in the circle of the French *philosophes*; the other Neapolitan abbatte ANTONIO GENOVESI (1712-1769), the "redeemer of the Italian mind,"<sup>1</sup> and the chief establisher of economic science for modern Italy.<sup>2</sup> To these names may be added those of ALFIERI, one of the strongest anti-clericalists of his age; BETTINELLI, the correspondent of Voltaire and author of *The Resurrection of Italy* (1775); Count DANDOLO, author of a French work on *The New Men* (1799); and the learned GIANNONE, author of the great anti-papal *History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1723), who, after more than one narrow escape, was thrown in prison by the king of Sardinia, and died there (1748) after twelve years' confinement.

To the merits of Algarotti and Genovesi there are high contemporary testimonies. Algarotti was on friendly terms with Cardinal Ganganelli, who in 1769 became Pope Clement XIV. In 1754 the latter writes<sup>3</sup> him: "My dear Count, Contrive matters so, in spite of your philosophy, that I may see you in heaven; for I should be very sorry to lose sight of you for an eternity. You are one of those rare men, both for heart and understanding, whom we could wish to love even beyond the grave, when we have once had the advantage of knowing them. No one has more reasons to be convinced of the spirituality and immortality of the soul than you have. The years glide away for the philosophers as well as for the ignorant; and what is to be the term of them cannot but employ a man who thinks. Own that I can manage sermons so as not to frighten away a *bel esprit*; and that if every one delivered as short and as friendly sermons as I do, you would sometimes go to hear a preacher. But barely hearing will not do.....the amiable Algarotti must become as good a Christian as he is a philosopher: then should I doubly be his friend and servant."<sup>4</sup>

In an earlier letter, Ganganelli writes: "The Pope [Benedict XIV] is ever great and entertaining for his *bons mots*. He was saying the

<sup>1</sup> Pecchio, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. McCulloch, *Literature of Political Economy*, 1845, p. 64; Blanqui, *Hist. de l'économie politique*, 2e éd. ii, 432.

<sup>3</sup> As to the genuineness of the Ganganelli letters, originally much disputed, see Von Reumont's *Ganganelli, Papst Clemens XIV; seine Briefe und seine Zeit*, 1847, pp. 40-44.

<sup>4</sup> Lett. lvi, Eng. tr. 1777, i, 141-42. No. lxxii in Von Reumont's *Ganganelli*, 1847.



other day that he had always loved you, and that it would give him very great pleasure to see you again. He speaks with admiration of the king of Prussia.....whose history will make one of the finest monuments of the eighteenth century. See here and acknowledge my generosity! For that prince makes the greatest jest possible of the Court of Rome, and of us monks and friars. Cardinal Querini will not be satisfied unless he have you with him for some time at Brescia. He one day told me that he would invite you to come and dedicate his library.....There is no harm in preaching to a philosopher who seldom goes to hear a sermon, and who will not have become a great saint by residing at Potsdam. You are there three men whose talents might be of great use to religion if you would change their direction—viz. Yourself, Mons. de Voltaire, and M. de Maupertuis. But that is not the *ton* of the age, and you are resolved to follow the fashion."<sup>1</sup> Ganganelli in his correspondence reveals himself as an admirer of Newton<sup>2</sup> and somewhat averse to religious zeal.<sup>3</sup> Of the papal government he admitted that it was favourable "neither to commerce, to agriculture, nor to population, which precisely constitute the essence of [public felicity," while suavely reminding the Englishman of the "inconveniences" of his own government.<sup>4</sup> To the learned Muratori, who suffered at the hands of the bigots, he and Pope Benedict XIV gave their sympathy.<sup>5</sup>

But Ganganelli's own thinking on the issues between reason and religion was entirely commonplace. "Whatever," he wrote, "departs from the account given of the Creation in the book of Genesis has nothing to support it but paradoxes, or, at most, mere hypotheses. Moses alone, as being an inspired author, could perfectly acquaint us with the formation of the world, and the development of its parts. ....Whoever does not see the truth in what Moses relates was never born to know it."<sup>6</sup> It was only in his relation to the bigots of his own Church that his thinking was rationalistic. "The Pope," he writes to a French marquis, "relies on Providence; but God does not perform miracles every time he is asked to do it. Besides, is he to perform one that Rome may enjoy a right of seignory over the Duchy of Parma?"<sup>7</sup> At his death an Italian wrote of him that "the distinction he was able to draw between dogmas or discipline and ultramontane opinions gave him the courage to take many oppor-

<sup>1</sup> Lett. xiii, 1749. Eng. tr. i, 44-46; No. cxiv in Von Reumont's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Lett. vi and xiv; Nos. ix and xxii in Von Reumont.

<sup>3</sup> Lett. xxx, p. 83; No. xxxiv in Von Reumont.

<sup>4</sup> Lett. xci; No. xcii in Von Reumont. <sup>5</sup> Lett. cxlvi; No. xlii in Von Reumont.

<sup>6</sup> Lett. lxxxii, 1753 or 1754; No. lxi in Von Reumont.

<sup>7</sup> Lett. cxxiv, 1769. This letter is not in Von Reumont's collection, and appears to be regarded by him as spurious—or unduly indiscreet.

tunities of promoting the peace of the State." His tolerance is sufficiently exhibited in one of his letters to Algarotti: "I hope that you will preach to me some of these days, so that each may have his turn."<sup>1</sup> Freethought had achieved something when a Roman Cardinal, a predestinate Pope, could so write to an avowed free-thinker. Concerning Galiani we have the warm panegyric of Grimm. "If I have any vanity with which to reproach myself," he writes, "it is that which I derive in spite of myself from the fact of the conformity of my ideas with those of the two rarest men whom I have the happiness to know, Galiani and Denis Diderot."<sup>2</sup> Grimm held Galiani to be of all men the best qualified to write a true ecclesiastical history. But the history that would have satisfied him and Grimm was not to be published in that age.

Italy, however, had done her full share, considering her heritage of burdens and hindrances, in the intellectual work of the century; and in the names of Galvani and Volta stands the record of one more of her great contributions to human enlightenment. Under Duke Leopold II of Tuscany the papacy was so far defied that books put on the *Index* were produced for him under the imprint of London;<sup>3</sup> and the papacy itself at length gave way to the spirit of reform, Clement XIV consenting among other things to abolish the Order of Jesuits (1773), after his predecessor had died of grief over his proved impotence to resist the secular policy of the States around him.<sup>4</sup> In Tuscany, indeed, the reaction against the French Revolution was instant and severe. Leopold succeeded his brother Joseph as emperor of Austria in 1790, but died in 1792; and in his realm, as was the case in Denmark and in Spain in the same century, the reforms imposed from above by a liberal sovereign were found to have left much traditionalism untouched. After 1792, Ferdinando III suspended some of his father's most liberal edicts, amid the applause of the reactionaries; and in 1799, after the first short stay of the revolutionary French army, out of its one million inhabitants no fewer than 22,000 were prosecuted for "French opinions."<sup>5</sup> Certainly some of the "French opinions" were wild enough; for instance, the practice among ladies of dressing *alla ghigliottina*, with a red ribbon round the neck, a usage borrowed about 1795 from France.<sup>6</sup> As Quinet sums up, the revolution was too strong a medicine for the Italy of that age. The young abbate

<sup>1</sup> Lett. lxxxiii, 1754; No. lxxiii in Von Reumont.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie de 1815 à 1830*, 1906, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Parini wrote a reproving Ode on the subject. (Henri Hauvette, *Littérature Italienne*, 1906, p. 371.) He was one of those disillusioned by the course of the Revolution. (*Id.* p. 375.)

<sup>5</sup> *Corr. Litt.* as cited, vii, 104.

<sup>6</sup> Zeller, pp. 478-79.



Monti, the chief poet of the time, was a freethinker, but he alternated his strokes for freedom with unworthy compliances.<sup>1</sup> Such was the dawn of the new Italian day that has since slowly but steadily broadened, albeit under many a cloud.

### § 5. Spain and Portugal

1. For the rest of Europe during the eighteenth century, we have to note only traces of receptive thought. Spain under Bourbon rule, as already noted, experienced an administrative renaissance. Such men as Count ARANDA (1718-99) and Aszo y del Rio (1742-1814) wrought to cut the claws of the Inquisition and to put down the Jesuits; but not yet, after the long work of destruction accomplished by the Church in the past, could Spain produce a fresh literature of any far-reaching power. When Aranda was about to be appointed in 1766, his friends the French *Encyclopédistes* prematurely proclaimed their exultation in the reforms he was to accomplish; and he sadly protested that they had thereby limited his possibilities.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless he wrought much, the power of the Inquisition in Spain being already on the wane. Dr. Joaquin Villanueva, one of the ecclesiastical statesmen who took part in its suppression by the Cortes at Cadiz in 1813, tells how, in his youth, under the reign of Charles III, it was a current saying among the students at college that while the clever ones could rise to important posts in the Church, or in the law, the blockheads would be sure to find places in the Inquisition.<sup>3</sup> It was of course still powerful for social terrorism and minor persecution; but its power of taking life was rapidly dwindling. Between 1746 and 1759 it had burned only ten persons; from 1759 until 1781 it burned only four; thereafter none,<sup>4</sup> the last case having provoked protests which testified to the moral change wrought in Europe by a generation of freethought.

In Spain too, as elsewhere, freethought had made way among the upper classes; and in 1773 we find the Duke d'Alba (formerly Huescar), ex-ambassador of Spain to France, subscribing eighty louis for a statue to Voltaire. "Condemned to cultivate my reason in secret," he wrote to D'Alembert, "I see this opportunity to give a public testimony of my gratitude to and admiration for the great man who first showed me the way."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hauvette, pp. 391-93.

<sup>2</sup> Coxe, *Memoirs of the Bourbon Kings of Spain*, ed. 1815, iv, 408.

<sup>3</sup> Villanueva, *Vida Literaria*, London, 1825.

<sup>4</sup> Buckle, iii, 547-48 (1-vol. ed. 599-600). The last victim seems to have been a woman accused of witchcraft. Her nose was cut off before her execution. See the *Marokkanische Briefe*, 1785, p. 36; and Buckle's note 272.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of D'Alembert to Voltaire, 13 mai, 1773.

2. Still all freethinking in Spain ran immense risks, even under Charles III. The Spanish admiral Solano was denounced by his almoner to the Inquisition for having read Raynal, and had to demand pardon on his knees of the Inquisition and God.<sup>1</sup> Aranda himself was from first to last four times arraigned before the Inquisition,<sup>2</sup> escaping only by his prestige and power. So eminent a personage as P. A. J. Olavidès, known in France as the Count of Pilos (1726-1803), could not thus escape. He had been appointed by Charles III prefect of Seville, and had carried out for the king the great work of colonizing the Sierra Morena,<sup>3</sup> of which region he was governor. At the height of his career, in 1776, he was arrested and imprisoned, "as suspected of professing impious sentiments, particularly those of Voltaire and Rousseau, with whom he had carried on a very intimate correspondence." He had spoken unwarily to inhabitants of the new towns under his jurisdiction concerning the exterior worship of deity in Spain, the worship of images, the fast days, the cessation of work on holy days, the offerings at mass, and all the rest of the apparatus of popular Catholicism.<sup>4</sup> Olavidès prudently confessed his error, declaring that he had "never lost his inner faith." After two years' detention he was forced to make his penance at a lesser *auto da fé* in presence of sixty persons of distinction, many of whom were suspected of holding similar opinions, and were thus grimly warned to keep their counsel. During four hours the reading of his process went on, and then came the sentence. He was condemned to pass eight years in a convent; to be banished forever from Madrid, Seville, Cordova, and the new towns of the Sierra Morena, and to lose all his property; he was pronounced incapable henceforth of holding any public employment or title of honour; and he was forbidden to mount a horse, to wear any ornament of gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, or other precious stones, or clothing of silk or fine linen. On hearing his sentence he fainted. Afterwards, on his knees, he received absolution. Escaping some time afterwards from his convent, he reached France. After some years more, he cynically produced a work entitled *The Gospel Triumphant, or the Philosopher Converted*, which availed to procure a repeal of his sentence; and he returned into favour.<sup>5</sup> In his youth he "had not the talent to play the hypocrite." In the end he mastered the art as few had done.

3. Another grandee, Don Christophe Ximenez de Gongora, Duke of Almodobar, published a free and expurgated translation of

<sup>1</sup> Grimm, *Corr. Litt.* x, 393.

<sup>4</sup> Llorente, ii, 544.

<sup>2</sup> Llorente, ii, 534.

<sup>3</sup> As to which see Buckle, p. 607.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii, 544-47.



Raynal's *History of the Indies* under another title;<sup>1</sup> and though he put upon the book only an anagram of his name, he presented copies to the king. The inquisitors, learning as much, denounced him as "suspected of having embraced the systems of unbelieving philosophers"; but this time the prosecution broke down for lack of evidence.<sup>2</sup> A similar escape was made by Don Joseph Nicholas d'Azara, who had been minister of foreign affairs, minister plenipotentiary of the king at Rome, and ambassador extraordinary at Paris, and was yet denounced at Saragossa and Madrid as an "unbelieving philosopher."<sup>3</sup> Count Ricla, minister of war under Charles III, was similarly charged, and similarly escaped for lack of proofs.<sup>4</sup>

4. In another case, a freethinking priest skilfully anticipated prosecution. Don Philip de Samaniego, "priest, archdeacon of Pampeluna, chevalier of the order of St. James, counsellor of the king and secretary-general, interpreter of foreign languages," was one of those invited to assist at the *auto da fé* of Olavidès. The impression made upon him was so strong that he speedily prepared with his own hand a confession to the effect that he had read many forbidden books, such as those of Voltaire, Mirabeau, Rousseau, Hobbes, Spinoza, Montesquieu, Bayle, D'Alembert, and Diderot; and that he had been thus led into skepticism; but that after serious reflection he had resolved to attach himself firmly and forever to the Catholic faith, and now begged to be absolved. The sentence was memorable. He was ordered first to confirm his confession by oath; then to state how and from whom he had obtained the prohibited books, where they now were, with what persons he had talked on these matters, what persons had either refuted or adopted his views, and which of those persons had seemed to be aware of such doctrines in advance; such a detailed statement being the condition of his absolution. Samaniego obeyed, and produced a long declaration in which he incriminated nearly every enlightened man at the court, naming Aranda, the Duke of Almodobar, Ricla, and the minister Florida Blanca; also General Ricardos, Count of Truillas, General Massones, Count of Montalvo, ambassador at Paris and brother of the Duke of Sotomayor; and Counts Campomanes, Orreilly, and Lascey. Proceedings were begun against one and all; but the undertaking was too comprehensive, and the proofs were avowed to be

<sup>1</sup> Grimm is evidently in error in his statement (*Correspondance*, ed. 1829-31, x, 394) that one of the main grievances against Olavidès was his having caused to be made a Spanish translation of Raynal's book, which was never published. No such offence is mentioned by Llorente. The case of Almodobar had been connected in French rumour with that of Olavidès.

<sup>2</sup> Llorente, ii, 532.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ii, 534-35.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 547-48.

insufficient.<sup>1</sup> What became of Samaniego, history saith not. A namesake of his, Don Felix-Maria de Samaniego, one of the leading men of letters of the reign of Charles IV, was arraigned before the Inquisition of Logroño as "suspected of having embraced the errors of modern philosophers and read prohibited books," but contrived, through his friendship with the minister of justice, to arrange the matter privately.<sup>2</sup>

5. Out of a long series of other men of letters persecuted by the Inquisition for giving signs of enlightenment, a few cases are preserved by its historian, Llorente. Don Benedict Bails, professor of mathematics at Madrid and author of a school-book on the subject, was proceeded against in his old age, towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as suspected of "atheism and materialism." He was ingenuous enough to confess that he had "had doubts on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul," but that after serious reflection he was repentant and ready to abjure all his errors. He thus escaped, after an imprisonment. Don Louis Cagnuelo, advocate, was forced to abjure for having written against popular superstition and against monks in his journal *The Censor*, and was forbidden to write in future on any subject of religion or morals. F. P. Centeno, one of the leading critics of the reigns of Charles III and Charles IV, was an Augustinian monk; but his profession did not save him from the Inquisition when he made enemies by his satirical criticisms, though he was patronized by the minister Florida Blanca. To make quite sure, he was accused at once of atheism and Lutheranism. He had in fact preached against ceremonialism, and as censor he had deleted from a catechism for the free schools of Madrid an article affirming the existence of the Limbo of children who had died unbaptized. Despite a most learned defence, he was condemned as "violently suspected of heresy" and forced to abjure, whereafter he went mad and in that state died.<sup>3</sup>

6. Another *savant* of the same period, Don Joseph de Clavijo y Faxardo, director of the natural history collection at Madrid, was in turn arraigned as having "adopted the anti-Christian principles of modern philosophy." He had been the friend of Buffon and Voltaire at Paris, had admirably translated Buffon's *Natural History*, with notes, and was naturally something of a deist and materialist. Having the protection of Aranda, he escaped with a secret penance and abjuration.<sup>4</sup> Don Thomas Iriarte, chief of the archives in the

<sup>1</sup> Llorente, ii, 549-50.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ii, 472-73.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 436-40.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* ii, 440-42. Llorente mentions that Clavijo edited a journal named *The Thinker*, "at a time when hardly anyone was to be found who thought." A Frenchman, Langle



ministry of foreign affairs, was likewise indicted towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as "suspected of anti-Christian philosophy," and escaped with similarly light punishment.<sup>1</sup>

7. Still in the same reign, the Jesuit Francisco de Ista, author of an extremely popular satire against absurd preachers, the *History of the famous preacher Fray Gerondif*, published under the pseudonym of Don Francisco Lobon de Salazar—a kind of ecclesiastical *Don Quixote*—so infuriated the preaching monks that the Holy Office received "an almost infinite number of denunciations of the book." Ista, however, was a Jesuit, and escaped, through the influence of his order, with a warning.<sup>2</sup> Influence, indeed, could achieve almost anything in the Holy Office, whether for culprits or against the uninculpable. In 1796, Don Raymond de Salas, a professor at Salamanca, was actually prosecuted by the Inquisition of Madrid as being suspected of having adopted the principles of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other modern philosophers, he having read their works. The poor man proved that he had done so only in order to refute them, and produced the theses publicly maintained at Salamanca by his pupils as a result of his teachings. The prosecution was a pure work of personal enmity on the part of the Archbishop of Santiago (formerly bishop of Salamanca) and others, and Salas was acquitted, with the statement that he was entitled to reparation. Again and again did his enemies revive the case, despite repeated acquittals, he being all the while in durance, and at length he had to "abjure," and was banished the capital. After a time the matter was forced on the attention of the Government, with the result that even Charles IV was asked by his ministers to ordain that henceforth the Inquisition should not arrest anyone without prior intimation to the king. At this stage, however, the intriguing archbishop successfully intervened, and the ancient machinery for the stifling of thought remained intact for the time.<sup>3</sup>

8. It is plain that the combined power of the Church, the orders, and the Inquisition, even under Charles III, had been substantially unimpaired, and rested on a broad foundation of popular fanaticism and ignorance. The Inquisition attacked not merely freethought but heresy of every kind, persecuting Jansenists and Molinists as of old it had persecuted Lutherans, only with less power of murder.

having asserted, in his *Voyage d'Espagne*, that the *Thinker* was without merit, the historian comments that if Langle is right in the assertion, it will be the sole verity in his book, but that, in view of his errors on all other matters, it is probable that he is wrong there also.

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* ii, 450-51. The book was prohibited, but a printer at Bayonne reissued it with an additional volume of the tracts written for and against it.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ii, 469-72.

<sup>3</sup> Llorente, p. 449.

That much the Bourbon kings and their ministers could accomplish, but no more. The trouble was that the enlightened administration of Charles III in Spain did not build up a valid popular education, the sole security for durable rationalism. Its school policy, though not without zeal, was undemocratic, and so left the priests in control of the mind of the multitude; and throughout the reign the ecclesiastical revenues had been allowed to increase greatly from private sources.<sup>1</sup> Like Leopold of Tuscany, he was in advance of his people, and imposed his reforms from above. When, accordingly, the weak and pious Charles IV succeeded in 1788, three of the anti-clerical Ministers of his predecessor, including Aranda, were put under arrest,<sup>2</sup> and clericalism resumed full sway, to the extent even of vetoing the study of moral philosophy in the universities.<sup>3</sup> Mentally and materially alike, Spain relapsed to her former state of indigence; and the struggle for national existence against Napoleon helped rather traditionalist sentiment than the spirit of innovation.

9. Portugal in the same period, despite the anti-clerical policy of the famous Marquis of Pombal, made no noticeable intellectual progress. Though that powerful statesman in 1761 abolished slavery in the kingdom,<sup>4</sup> he too failed to see the need for popular education, while promoting that of the upper classes.<sup>5</sup> His expulsion of the Jesuits, accordingly, did but raise up against him a new set of enemies in the shape of the *Jacobeos*, "the Blessed," a species of Catholic Puritan, who accused him of impiety. His somewhat forensic defence<sup>6</sup> leaves the impression that he was in reality a deist; but though he fought the fanatics by imprisoning the Bishop of Coimbra, their leader, and by causing Molière's *Tartufe* to be translated and performed, he does not seem to have shown any favour to the deistical literature of which the Bishop had composed a local *Index Expurgatorius*.<sup>7</sup> In Portugal, as later in Spain, accordingly, a complete reaction set in with the death of the enlightened king. Dom Joseph died in 1777, and Pombal was at once disgraced and his enemies released, the pious Queen Maria and her Ministers subjecting him to persecution for some years. In 1783, the Queen, who became a religious maniac, and died insane,<sup>8</sup> is found establishing new nunneries, and so adding to one of the main factors in the impoverishment, moral and financial, of Portugal.

<sup>1</sup> Buckle, p. 618.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 612.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 613.

<sup>4</sup> Carnota, *The Marquis of Pombal*, 2nd ed. 1871, p. 242.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 240.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 261-62.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 262.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 375.



## § 6. Switzerland

During the period we have been surveying, up to the French Revolution, Switzerland, which owed much of new intellectual life to the influx of French Protestants at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,<sup>1</sup> exhibited no less than the other European countries the inability of the traditionary creed to stand criticism. Calvinism by its very rigour generated a reaction within its own special field; and the spirit of the slain Servetus triumphed strangely over that of his slayer. Genevan Calvinism, like that of the English Presbyterians, was transmuted first into a modified Arminianism, then into "Arianism" or Socinianism, then into the Unitarianism of modern times. In the eighteenth century Switzerland contributed to the European movement some names, of which by far the most famous is Rousseau; and the potent presence of Voltaire cannot have failed to affect Swiss culture. Before his period of influence, indeed, there had taken place not a little silent evolution of a Unitarian and deistic kind; Socinianism, as usual, leading the way. Among the families of Italian Protestant refugees who helped to invigorate the life of Switzerland, as French Protestants did later that of Germany, were the Turretini, of whom Francesco came to Geneva in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. One of his sons, Benedict, made a professor at twenty-four, became a leading theologian and preacher of orthodox Calvinism, and distinguished himself as an opponent of Arminianism.<sup>2</sup> Still more distinguished in his day was Benedict's son François (1623-1687), also a professor, who repeated his father's services, political and controversial, to orthodoxy, and combated Socinianism, as Benedict had done Arminianism. But François's son Jean-Alphonse, also a professor (whose Latin work on Christian evidences, translated into French by a colleague, we have seen adopted and adapted by the Catholic authorities in France), became a virtual Unitarian<sup>3</sup> (1671-1737), and as such is still anathematized by Swiss Calvinists. Against the deists, however, he was industrious, as his grandfather, a heretic to Catholicism, had been against the Arminians, and his father against the Socinians. The family evolution in some degree typifies the theological process from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; and the apologetics of Jean-Alphonse

<sup>1</sup> Cp. P. Godet, *Hist. litt. de la suisse française*, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> E. de Budé, *Vie de François Turretini*, 1871, pp. 12-18. B. Turretini was commissioned to write a history of the Reformation at Geneva, which however remains in MS. He was further commissioned in 1621 to go to Holland to obtain financial help for the city, then seriously menaced by Savoy; and obtained 30,000 florins, besides smaller sums from Hamburg and Bremen.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Budé, as cited, pp. 24 (birth-date wrong), 294; and the *Avis de l'Éditeur* to the *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne* of J. A. Turretin, Paris, 1753.

testify to the vogue of critical deism among the educated class at Geneva in the days of Voltaire's nonage. He (or his translator) deals with the "natural" objections to the faith, cites approvingly Locke, Lardner, and Clarke, and combats Woolston, but names no other English deist. The heresy, therefore, would seem to be a domestic development from the roots noted by Viret nearly two centuries before. One of Turretini's annotators complacently observes<sup>1</sup> that though deists talk of natural religion, none of them has ever written a book in exposition of it, the task being left to the Christians. The writer must have been aware, on the one hand, that any deist who in those days should openly expound natural religion as against revealed would be liable to execution for blasphemy in any European country save England, where, as it happened, Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Tindal had all maintained the position, and on the other hand he must have known that the *Ethica* of Spinoza was naturalistic. The false taunt merely goes to prove that deists could maintain their heresy on the Continent at that time without the support of books. But soon after Turretini's time they give literary indication of their existence even in Switzerland; and in 1763 we find Voltaire sending a package of copies of his treatise on Toleration by the hand of "a young M. Turretin of Geneva," who "is worthy to see the brethren, though he is the grandson of a celebrated priest of Baal. He is reserved, but decided, as are most of the Genevese. Calvin begins in our cantons to have no more credit than the pope."<sup>2</sup> For this fling there was a good deal of justification. When in 1763 the Council of Geneva officially burned a pamphlet reprint of the *Vicaire Savoyard* from Rousseau's *Émile* there was an immediate public protest by "two hundred persons, among whom there were three priests";<sup>3</sup> and some five weeks later "a hundred persons came for the third time to protest..... They say that it is permissible to every citizen to write what he will on religion; that he should not be condemned without a hearing; and that the rights of men must be respected."<sup>4</sup> All this was not a sudden product of the freethinking influence of Voltaire and Rousseau, which had but recently begun. An older leaven had long been at work. The *Principes du Droit Naturel* of J. J. Burlamaqui (1748), save for its

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, i, 8, note.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre à Damilaville, 6 décembre, 1763. The reserved youth may have been either Jean-Alphonse, grandson of the Socinian professor, who was born in 1735 and died childless, or some other member of the numerous Turretini clan.

<sup>3</sup> Voltaire to Damilaville, 12 juillet, 1763. "Il faut que vous sachiez," explains Voltaire "que Jean Jacques n'a été condamné que parce qu'on n'aime pas sa personne."

<sup>4</sup> Voltaire to Damilaville, 21 août, 1763.



subsumption of deity as the originator of all human tendencies, is strictly naturalistic and utilitarian in its reasoning, and clearly exhibits the influence of Hobbes and Mandeville.<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, too, in his correspondence, is found frequently speaking with a wicked chuckle of the Unitarianism of the clergy of Geneva,<sup>2</sup> a theme on which D'Alembert had written openly in his article *Genève* in the *Encyclopédie* in 1756.<sup>3</sup> So early as 1757, Voltaire roundly affirms that there are only a few Calvinists left: "tous les honnêtes gens sont déistes par Christ."<sup>4</sup> And when the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne, writes in 1759 that "deism is become the fashionable religion.....Europe is inundated with the works of deists; and their partisans have made perhaps more proselytes in the space of eighty years than were made by the apostles and the first Fathers of the Church,"<sup>5</sup> he must be held to testify in some degree concerning Switzerland. The chief native service to intellectual progress thus far, however, was rendered in the field of the natural sciences, Swiss religious opinion being only passively liberalized, mainly in a Unitarian direction.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. i, 2, 16, 56, 58, 65, 68, 70, 71, 73, 94; ii, 290, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For instance: "Je me recommande contre eux [les prêtres] à Dieu le père, car pour le fils, vous savez qu'il a aussi peu de crédit que sa mère à Genève" (Lettre à D'Alembert, 25 mars, 1758).....Une république où tout le monde est ouvertement socinien, exceptés ceux qui font anabaptistes ou moraves. Figurez-vous, mon cher ami, qu'il n'y a pas actuellement un chrétien de Genève à Berne; cela fait frémir! (To the same, 8 fév. 1776.)

<sup>3</sup> On this see the correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert, under dates 8, 28, and 29 janvier, 1757.

<sup>4</sup> Lettre à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1757.

<sup>5</sup> *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 6. Cp. pp. 84, 94, 103, 105, 412.

## CHAPTER XX

### EARLY FREETHOUGHT IN THE UNITED STATES

1. PERHAPS the most signal of all the proofs of the change wrought in the opinion of the civilized world in the eighteenth century is the fact that at the time of the War of Independence the leading statesmen of the American colonies were deists. Such were BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, the diplomatist of the Revolution; THOMAS PAINE, its prophet and inspirer; WASHINGTON, its commander; and JEFFERSON, its typical legislator. But for these four men the American Revolution probably could not have been accomplished in that age; and they thus represent in a peculiar degree the power of new ideas, in fit conditions, to transform societies, at least politically. On the other hand, the fashion in which their relation to the creeds of their time has been garbled, alike in American and English histories, proves how completely they were in advance of the average thought of their day; and also how effectively the mere institutional influence of creeds can arrest a nation's mental development. It is still one of the stock doctrines of religious sociology in England and America that deism, miscalled atheism, wrought the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution; when as a matter of fact the same deism was at the head of affairs in the American.

2. The rise of rationalism in the colonies must be traced in the main to the imported English literature of the eighteenth century; for the first Puritan settlements had contained at most only a fraction of freethought; and the conditions, so deadly for all manner even of devout heresy, made avowed unbelief impossible. The superstitions and cruelties of the Puritan clergy, however, must have bred a silent reaction, which prepared a soil for the deism of the next age.<sup>1</sup> "The perusal of Shaftesbury and Collins," writes Franklin with reference to his early youth, "had made me a skeptic," after being "previously so as to many doctrines of Christianity."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Wesley in his Journal, dating May, 1737, speaks of having everywhere met many more "converts to infidelity" than "converts to Popery," with apparent reference to Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the wording of the passage in the *Autobiography* in the Edinburgh edition of 1803, p. 25, which follows the French translation of the original MS. In the edition of the *Autobiography and Letters* in the Minerva Library, edited by Mr. Bettany (1891, p. 11), which follows Mr. Bigelow's edition of 1879, it runs: "Being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine....."



This was in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, about 1720, so that the importation of deism had been prompt.<sup>1</sup> Throughout life he held to the same opinion, conforming sufficiently to keep on fair terms with his neighbours,<sup>2</sup> and avoiding anything like critical propaganda; though on challenge, in the last year of his life, he avowed his negatively deistic position.<sup>3</sup>

3. Similarly prudent was JEFFERSON, who, like Franklin and Paine, extolled the Gospel Jesus and his teachings, but rejected the notion of supernatural revelation.<sup>4</sup> In a letter written so late as 1822 to a Unitarian correspondent, while refusing to publish another of similar tone, on the score that he was too old for strife, he declared that he "should as soon undertake to bring the crazy skulls of Bedlam to sound understanding as to inculcate reason into that of an Athanasian."<sup>5</sup> His experience of the New England clergy is expressed in allusions to Connecticut as having been "the last retreat of monkish darkness, bigotry, and abhorrence of those advances of the mind which had carried the other States a century ahead of them"; and in congratulations with John Adams (who had written that "this would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it"), when "this den of the priesthood is at last broken up."<sup>6</sup> John Adams, whose letters with their "crowd of skepticisms" kept even Jefferson from sleep,<sup>7</sup> seems to have figured as a member of a Congregationalist church, while in reality a Unitarian.<sup>8</sup> Still more prudent was Washington, who seems to have ranked habitually as a member of the Episcopal church; but concerning whom Jefferson relates that, when the clergy, having noted his constant abstention from any public mention of the Christian religion, so penned an address to him on his withdrawal from the Presidency as almost to force him to some declaration, he answered every part of the address but that, which he entirely ignored. It is further noted that only in his valedictory letter to the governors of the States, on resigning his commission, did he speak of the "benign influence of the Christian religion"<sup>9</sup>—the common tone of the American deists of that day. It is further

<sup>1</sup> Only in 1784, however, appeared the first anti-Christian work published in America, Ethan Allen's *Reason the only Oracle of Man*. As to its positions see Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 192-93. <sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, Bettany's ed. pp. 56, 65, 74, 77, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of March 9, 1790. *Id.* p. 636.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. J. T. Morse's *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 339-40.

<sup>5</sup> MS. cited by Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310-11.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs of Jefferson*, 1829, iv, 300-301. The date is 1817. These and other passages exhibiting Jefferson's deism are cited in Rayner's *Sketches of the Life, etc., of Jefferson*, 1832, pp. 513-17.

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs of Jefferson*, iv, 331.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310. <sup>9</sup> Extract from Jefferson's Journal under date February 1, 1800, in the *Memoirs*, iv, 512. Gouverneur Morris, whom Jefferson further cites as to Washington's unbelief, is not a very good witness; but the main fact cited is significant.

established that Washington avoided the Communion in church.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, the broad fact that all mention of deity was excluded from the Constitution of the United States must be historically taken to signify a profound change in the convictions of the leading minds among the people as compared with the beliefs of their ancestors. At the same time, the fact that they as a rule dissembled their unbelief is a proof that, even where legal penalties do not attach to an avowal of serious heresy, there inheres in the menace of mere social ostracism a power sufficient to coerce the outward life of public and professional men of all grades, in a democratic community where faith maintains and is maintained by a competitive multitude of priests. With this force the freethought of our own age has to reckon, after Inquisitions and blasphemy laws have become obsolete.

4. Nothing in American culture-history more clearly proves the last proposition than the case of THOMAS PAINE, the virtual founder of modern democratic freethought in Great Britain and the States.<sup>2</sup> It does not appear that Paine openly professed any heresy while he lived in England, or in America before the French Revolution. Yet the first sentence of his *Age of Reason*, of which the first part was written shortly before his imprisonment, under sentence of death from the Robespierre Government, in Paris (1793), shows that he had long held pronounced deistic opinions.<sup>3</sup> They were probably matured in the States, where, as we have seen, such views were often privately held, though there, as Franklin is said to have jesuitically declared in his old age, by way of encouraging immigration: "Atheism is unknown; infidelity rare and secret, so that persons may live to a great age in this country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel." Paine did an unequalled service to the American Revolution by his *Common Sense* and his series of pamphlets headed *The Crisis*: there is, in fact, little question that but for the intense stimulus thus given by him at critical moments the movement might have collapsed at an early stage. Yet he seems to have had no thought there and then of avowing his deism. It was in part for the express purpose of resisting the ever-strengthening attack of atheism in France on deism

<sup>1</sup> Compare the testimony given by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Albany, in 1831, as cited by R. D. Owen in his *Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible* with O. Bachelier (London, ed. 1840, p. 231), with the replies on the other side (pp. 233-34). Washington's death-bed attitude was that of a deist. See all the available data for his supposed orthodoxy in Sparks's *Life of Washington*, 1852, app. iv.

<sup>2</sup> So far as is known, Paine was the first writer to use the expression, "the religion of Humanity." See Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 206. To Paine's influence, too, appears to be due the founding of the first American Anti-Slavery Society. *Id.* i, 51-52, 60, 80, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 205-207.



itself that he undertook to save it by repudiating the Judæo-Christian revelation; and it is not even certain that he would have issued the *Age of Reason* when it did appear, had he not supposed he was going to his death when put under arrest, on which score he left the manuscript for publication.<sup>1</sup>

5. Its immediate effect was much greater in Britain, where his *Rights of Man* had already won him a vast popularity in the teeth of the most furious reaction, than in America. There, to his profound chagrin, he found that his honest utterance of his heresy brought on him hatred, calumny, ostracism, and even personal and political molestation. In 1797 he had founded in Paris the little "Church of Theo-philanthropy," beginning his inaugural discourse with the words: "Religion has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality; the other by natural philosophy."<sup>2</sup> These were his settled convictions; and he lived to find himself shunned and vilified, in the name of religion, in the country whose freedom he had so puissantly wrought to win.<sup>3</sup> The Quakers, his father's sect, refused him a burial-place. He has had sympathy and fair play, as a rule, only from the atheists whom he distrusted and opposed, or from thinkers who no longer hold by deism. There is reason to think that in his last years the deistic optimism which survived the deep disappointments of the French Revolution began to give way before deeper reflection on the cosmic problem,<sup>4</sup> if not before the treatment he had undergone at the hands of Unitarians and Trinitarians alike. The Butlerian argument, that Nature is as unsatisfactory as revelation, had been pressed upon him by Bishop Watson in a reply to the *Age of Reason*; and though, like most deists of his age, he regarded it as a vain defence of orthodoxy, he was not the man to remain long blind to its force against deistic assumptions. Like Franklin, he had energetically absorbed and given

<sup>1</sup> A letter of Franklin to someone who had shown him a freethinking manuscript, advising against its publication (Bettany's ed. p. 620), has been conjecturally connected with Paine, but was clearly not addressed to him. Franklin died in 1790, and Paine was out of America from 1787 onwards. But the letter is in every way inapplicable to the *Age of Reason*. The remark: "If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be without it?" could not be made to a devout deist like Paine.

<sup>2</sup> Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 254-55.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Conway's chapter, "The American Inquisition," vol. ii, ch. xvi; also pp. 361-62, 374, 379. The falsity of the ordinary charges against Paine's character is finally made clear by Dr. Conway, ch. xix, and pp. 371, 383, 419, 423. Cp. the author's pamphlet, *Thomas Paine: An Investigation* (Bonner). The chronically revived story of his death-bed remorse for his writings—long ago exposed (Conway, ii, 420)—is definitively discredited in the latest reiteration. That occurs in the *Life and Letters of Dr. R. H. Thomas* (1905), the mother of whose stepmother was the Mrs. Mary Hinsdale, née Roscoe, on whose testimony the legend rests. Dr. Thomas, a Quaker of the highest character, accepted the story without question, but incidentally tells of the old lady (p. 13) that "her wandering fancies had all the charm of a present fairy-tale to us." No further proof is needed, after the previous exposure, of the worthlessness of the testimony in question.

<sup>4</sup> Conway, ii, 371.

out the new ideals of physical science; his originality in the invention of a tubular iron bridge, and in the application of steam to navigation,<sup>1</sup> being nearly as notable as that of Franklin's great discovery concerning electricity. Had the two men drawn their philosophy from the France of the latter part of the century instead of the England of the first, they had doubtless gone deeper. As it was, temperamental optimism had kept both satisfied with the transitional formula; and in the France of before and after the Revolution they lived pre-occupied with politics.

6. The habit of reticence or dissimulation among American public men was only too surely confirmed by the treatment meted out to Paine. Few stood by him; and the vigorous deistic movement set up in his latter years by Elihu Palmer soon succumbed to the conditions,<sup>2</sup> though Palmer's book, *The Principles of Nature* (1802, rep. by Richard Carlile, 1819), is a powerful attack on the Judaic and Christian systems all along the line. George Houston, leaving England after two years' imprisonment for his translation of d'Holbach's *Ecce Homo*, went to New York, where he edited the *Minerva* (1822), reprinted his book, and started a freethought journal, *The Correspondence*. That, however, lasted only eighteen months. All the while, such statesmen as Madison and Monroe, the latter Paine's personal friend, seem to have been of his way of thinking,<sup>3</sup> though the evidence is scanty. Thus it came about that, save for the liberal movement of the Hicksite Quakers,<sup>4</sup> the American deism of Paine's day was decorously transformed into the later Unitarianism, the extremely rapid advance of which in the next generation is the best proof of the commonness of private unbelief. The influence of Priestley, who, persecuted at home, went to end his days in the States, had doubtless much to do with the Unitarian development there, as in England; but it seems certain that the whole deistic movement, including the work of Paine and Palmer, had tended to move out of orthodoxy many of those who now, recoiling from the fierce hostility directed against the outspoken freethinkers, sought a more rational form of creed than that of the orthodox churches. The deistic tradition in a manner centred in the name of Jefferson, and the known deism of that leader would do much to make fashionable a heresy which combined his views with a decorous attitude to the Sacred Books.

<sup>1</sup> See the details in Conway's *Life*, ii, 280-81, and note. He had also a scheme for a gunpowder motor (*id.* and i, 240), and various other remarkable plans.

<sup>2</sup> Conway, ii, 362-71.

<sup>3</sup> Conway, ii, 422.

<sup>4</sup> Testimonies quoted by R. D. Owen, as cited, pp. 231-32.



## CHAPTER XXI

### FREETHOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

#### THE REACTION

ALL over the civilized world, as we have seen, the terrors of the French Revolution evoked an intellectual no less than a political reaction, its stress being most apparent and most destructive in those countries in which there had been previously the largest measure of liberty. Nowhere was it more intense or more disastrous than in England. In countries such as Denmark and Spain, only lately and superficially liberalized, there was no great progress to undo: in England, though liberty was never left without an indomitable witness, there was a violent reversal of general movement, not to be wholly rectified in half a century. Joined in a new activity with the civil power for the suppression of all innovating thought, the Church rapidly attained to an influence it had not possessed since the days of Sacheverel and a degree of wealth it had not before reached since the Reformation. The wealth of the upper class was at its disposal to an unheard-of extent, there being apparently no better way of fighting the new danger of democracy; and dissent joined hands with the establishment to promote orthodoxy.

The average tone in England in the first quarter of the century may be gathered from the language held by a man so enlightened, comparatively speaking, as Sydney Smith, wit, humourist, Whig, and clergyman. In 1801 we find him, in a preface never reprinted, prescribing various measures of religious strategy in addition "to the just, necessary, and innumerable invectives which have been levelled against Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the whole pandemonium of those martyrs to atheism, who toiled with such laborious malice, and suffered odium with such inflexible profligacy, for the wretchedness and despair of their fellow creatures."<sup>1</sup> That this was not jesting may be gathered from his daughter's account of his indignation when a publisher sent him "a work of irreligious tendency," and when Jeffrey admitted "irreligious

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, ed. 1869, p. 49. Lady Holland remarks on the same page that her father's religion had in it "nothing intolerant."

opinions" to the *Edinburgh Review*. To the former he writes that "every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel"; and to Jeffrey: "Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess infidel principles? Unless this is the case I must absolutely give up all connection with it."<sup>1</sup> All the while any semblance of "infidelity" in any article in the Review must have been of the most cautious kind.

In the Catholic countries, naturally, the reaction was no less violent. In Italy, as we saw, it began in Tuscany almost at once. The rule of Napoleon, it is true, secured complete freedom of the Press as regarded translation of freethinking books, an entire liberty of conscience in religious matters, and a sharp repression of clericalism, the latter policy going to the length of expelling all the religious orders and confiscating their property.<sup>2</sup> All this counted for change; but the Napoleonic rule all the while choked one of the springs of vital thought—to wit, the spirit of political liberty; and in 1814-15 the clerical system returned in full force, as it did all over Italy. Everywhere freethought was banned. All criticism of Catholicism was a penal offence; and in the kingdom of Naples alone, in 1825, there were 27,612 priests, 8,455 monks, 8,185 nuns, 20 archbishops, and 73 bishops, though in 1807 the French influence had caused the dissolution of some 250 convents.<sup>3</sup> At Florence the Censure forbade, in 1817, the issue of a new edition of the translated work of Cabanis on *Les Rapports du physique et du moral*; and Mascagni, the physiologist, was invited to delete from his work a definition of man in which no notice was taken of the soul.<sup>4</sup> It was even proclaimed that the works of Voltaire and Rousseau were not to be read in the public libraries without ecclesiastical permission; but this veto was not seriously treated.<sup>5</sup> All native energy, however, was either cowed or cajoled into passivity. If, accordingly, the mind of Italy was to survive, it must be by the assimilation of the culture of freer States; and this culture, reinforced by the writings of Leopardi, generated a new intellectual life, which was a main factor in the ultimate achievement of Italian liberation from Austrian rule.

Spain, under Charles IV, became so thoroughly re-clericalized at the very outbreak of the Revolution that no more leeway seemed possible; but even in Spain, early in the nineteenth century, the government found means to retrogress yet further, and the minister Caballero sent an order to the universities forbidding the study of

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie*, 1906, pp. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Ramage, *Nooks and Byways of Italy*, 1868, pp. 76, 105-13. Ramage describes the helplessness of the better minds before 1830.

<sup>4</sup> Luchaire, pp. 35, 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 30.



moral philosophy. The king, he justly declared, did not want philosophers, but good and obedient subjects.<sup>1</sup>

In France, where the downfall of Napoleon meant the restoration of the monarchy, the intellectual reaction was really less powerful than in England. The new spirit had been too widely and continuously at work, from Voltaire onwards, to be politically expelled; and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 gave the proof that even on the political side the old spirit was incapable of permanent recovery. In Germany, where freethinking was associated not with the beaten cause of the Revolution but in large measure with the national movement for liberation from the tyranny of Napoleon,<sup>2</sup> the religious reaction was substantially emotional and unintellectual, though it had intellectual representatives, notably Schleiermacher. Apart from his culture-movement, the revival consisted mainly in a new Pietism, partly orthodox, partly mystical;<sup>3</sup> and on those lines it ran later to the grossest excesses. But among the educated classes of Germany there was the minimum of arrest, because there the intellectual life was least directly associated with the political, and the ecclesiastical life relatively the least organized. The very separateness of the German States, then and later so often deplored by German patriots, was really a condition of relative security for freedom of thought and research; and the resulting multiplicity of universities meant a variety of intellectual effort not then paralleled in any other country.<sup>4</sup> What may be ranked as the most important effect of the reaction in Germany—the turning of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel in succession to the task of reconciling rational philosophy with religion in the interests of social order—was in itself a rationalistic process as compared with the attitude of orthodoxy in other lands. German scholarship, led by the re-organized university of Berlin, was in fact one of the most progressive intellectual forces in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century; and only its comparative isolation, its confinement to a cultured class, prevented it from affecting popular thought as widely as deism had done in the preceding century. Even in the countries in which popular and university culture were less sharply divided, the German influence was held at bay like others.

<sup>1</sup> Doblado (Blanco White), *Letters from Spain*, 1822, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the traveller and belletrist J. G. Seume, a zealous deist and opponent of atheism, and a no less zealous patriot, penned many fiercely freethinking maxims, as: "Where were the most so-called positive religions, there was always the least morality"; "Grotius and the Bible are the best supports of despotism"; "Heaven has lost us the earth"; "The best apostles of despotism and slavery are the mystics." *Apokryphen*, 1806-1807, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1839, iv, 157, 173, 177, 219.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Cottrell, *Religious Movements of Germany*, 1849, p. 12 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, pp. 138-39.

But in time the spirit of progress regained strength, the most decisive form of recovery being the new development of the struggle for political liberty from about 1830 onwards. In England the advance thenceforward was to be broadly continuous on the political side. On the Continent it culminated for the time in the explosions of 1848, which were followed in the Germanic world by another political reaction, in which freethought suffered; and in France, after a few years, by the Second Empire, in which clericalism was again fostered. But these checks have proved impermanent.

#### THE FORCES OF RENASCENCE

As with the cause of democracy, so with the cause of rationalism, the forward movement grew only the deeper and more powerful through the check; and the nineteenth century closed on a record of freethinking progress which may be said to outbulk that of all the previous centuries of the modern era together. So great was the activity of the century in point of mere quantity that it is impossible, within the scheme of a "Short History," to treat it on even such a reduced scale of narrative as has been applied to the past. A detailed history on national lines from the French Revolution onwards would mean another book as large as the present. On however large a scale it might be written, further, it would involve a recognition of international influences such as had never before been evolved, save when on a much smaller scale the educated world all round read and wrote Latin. Since Goethe, the international aspect of culture upon which he laid stress has become ever more apparent; and scientific and philosophical thought, in particular, are world-wide in their scope and bearing. It must here suffice, therefore, to take a series of broad and general views of the past century's work, leaving adequate critical and narrative treatment for separate undertakings.<sup>1</sup> The most helpful method seems to be that of a conspectus (1) of the main movements and forces that during the century affected in varying degrees the thought of the civilized world, and (2) of the main advances made and the point reached in the culture of the nations, separately considered. At the same time,

<sup>1</sup> When I thus planned the treatment of the nineteenth century in the first edition of this book, it was known to me that Mr. Alfred W. Benn had in hand a work on *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*; and the knowledge made me the more resolved to keep my own record condensed. Duly published in 1906 (Longmans, 2 vols.), Mr. Benn's book amply fulfilled expectations; and to it I would refer every reader who seeks a fuller survey than the present. Its freshness of thought and vigour of execution will more than repay him. Even Mr. Benn's copious work, however—devoting as it does a large amount of space to a preliminary survey of the eighteenth century—leaves room for various English monographs on the nineteenth, to say nothing of the culture history of a dozen other countries.



the forces of rationalism may be discriminated into Particular and General. We may then roughly represent the lines of movement, in non-chronological order, as follows:—

I.—*Forces of criticism and corrective thought bearing expressly on religious beliefs.*

1. In Great Britain and America, the new movements of popular freethought begun by Paine, and lasting continuously to the present day.
2. In France and elsewhere, the reverberation of the attack of Voltaire, d'Holbach, Dupuis, and Volney, carried on most persistently in Catholic countries by the Freemasons, as against official orthodoxy after 1815.
3. German "rationalism," proceeding from English deism, moving towards naturalist as against supernaturalist conceptions, dissolving the notion of the miraculous in both Old and New Testament history, analysing the literary structure of the sacred books, and all along affecting studious thought in other countries.
4. The literary compromise of Lessing, claiming for all religions a place in a scheme of "divine education."
5. In England, the neo-Christianity of the school of Coleridge, a disintegrating force, promoting the "Broad Church" tendency, which in Dean Milman was so pronounced as to bring on him charges of rationalism.
6. The utilitarianism of the school of Bentham, carried into moral and social science.
7. Comtism, making little direct impression on the "constructive" lines laid by the founder, but affecting critical thought in many directions.
8. German philosophy, Kantian and post-Kantian, in particular the Hegelian, turned to anti-Christian and anti-supernaturalist account by Strauss, Vatke, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, and Marx.
9. German atheism and scientific "materialism"—represented by Feuerbach and Büchner (who, however, rejected the term "materialism" as inappropriate).
10. Revived English deism, involving destructive criticism of Christianity, as in Hennell, F. W. Newman, R. W. Mackay, W. R. Greg, Theodore Parker, and Thomas Scott, partly in co-operation with Unitarianism.
11. American transcendentalism or pantheism—the school of Emerson.
12. Colenso's preliminary attack on the narrative of the Pentateuch, a systematized return to Voltairean common-sense, rectifying the unscientific course of the earlier "higher criticism" on the historical issue.
13. The later or scientific "higher criticism" of the Old Testament—represented by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and their successors.
14. New historical criticism of Christian origins, in particular the work of Strauss and Baur in Germany, Renan and Havet in France, and their successors.
15. Exhibition of rationalism within the churches, as in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland generally; in England in the *Essays and Reviews*; later in multitudes of essays and books, and in the ethical criticism of the Old Testament; in America in popular theology.
16. Association of rationalistic doctrine with the Socialist movements, new and old, from Owen to Bebel.
17. Communication of doubt and moral questioning through poetry and *belles-lettres*—as in Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Clough, Tennyson, Carlyle, Arnold, Browning, Swinburne, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Victor Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Leopardi, and certain French and English novelists.

II.—*Modern Science, physical, mental, and moral, sapping the bases of all supernaturalist systems.*

1. Astronomy, newly directed by Laplace.
2. Geology, gradually connected (as in Britain by Chambers) with
3. Biology, made definitely non-deistic by Darwin.
4. The comprehension of all science in the Evolution Theory, as by Spencer, advancing on Comte.
5. Psychology, as regards localization of brain functions.
6. Comparative mythology, as yet imperfectly applied to Christism.
7. Sociology, as outlined by Comte, Buckle, Spencer, Winwood Reade, Lester Ward, Giddings, Tarde, Durkheim, and others, on strictly naturalistic lines.
8. Comparative Hierology; the methodical application of principles insisted on by all the deists, and formulated in the interests of deism by Lessing, but latterly freed of his implications.
9. Above all, the later development of Anthropology (in the wide English sense of the term), which, beginning to take shape in the eighteenth century, came to new life in the latter part of the nineteenth; and is now one of the most widely cultivated of all the sciences—especially on the side of religious creed and psychology.

On the other hand, we may group somewhat as follows the general forces of retardation of freethought operating throughout the century:—

1. Penal laws, still operative in Britain and Germany against popular freethought propaganda, and till recently in Britain against any endowment of freethought.
2. Class interests, involving in the first half of the century a social conspiracy against rationalism in England.
3. Commercial pressure thus set up, and always involved in the influence of churches.
4. In England, identification of orthodox Dissent with political Liberalism—a sedative.
5. Concessions by the clergy, especially in England and the United States—to many, another sedative.
6. Above all, the production of new masses of popular ignorance in the industrial nations, and continued lack of education in the others.
7. On this basis, business-like and in large part secular-minded organization of the endowed churches, as against a freethought propaganda hampered by the previously named causes, and in England by laws which veto all direct endowment of anti-Christian heresy.

It remains to make, with forced brevity, the surveys thus outlined.

SECTION 1.—POPULAR PROPAGANDA AND CULTURE

1. If any one circumstance more than another differentiates the life of to-day from that of older civilizations, or from that of previous centuries of the modern era, it is the diffusion of rationalistic views among the "common people." In no other era is to be found the



phenomenon of widespread critical skepticism among the labouring masses: in all previous ages, though chronic complaint is made of some unbelief among the uneducated, the constant and abject ignorance of the mass of the people has been the sure foothold of superstitious systems. Within the last century the area of the recognizably civilized world has grown far vaster; and in the immense populations that have thus arisen there is a relative degree of enlightenment, coupled with a degree of political power never before attained. Merely to survey, then, the broad movement of popular culture in the period in question will yield a useful notion of the dynamic change in the balance of thought in modern times, and will make more intelligible the special aspects of the culture process.

This vital change in the distribution of knowledge is largely to be attributed to the written and spoken teaching of a line of men who made popular enlightenment their great aim. Their leading type among the English-speaking races is THOMAS PAINE, whom we have seen combining a gospel of democracy with a gospel of critical reason in the midst of the French Revolution. Never before had rationalism been made widely popular. The English and French deists had written for the middle and upper classes. Peter Annet was practically the first who sought to reach the multitude; and his punishment expressed the special resentment aroused in the governing classes by such a policy. Of all the English freethinkers of the earlier deistical period he alone was selected for reprinting by the propagandists of the Paine period. Paine was to Annet, however, as a cannon to a musket, and through the democratic ferment of his day he won an audience a hundredfold wider than Annet could have dreamt of reaching. The anger of the governing classes, in a time of anti-democratic panic, was proportional. Paine would have been at least imprisoned for his *Rights of Man* had he not fled from England in time; and the sale of all his books was furiously prohibited and ferociously punished. Yet they circulated everywhere, even in Protestant Ireland,<sup>1</sup> hitherto affected only under the surface of upper-class life by deism. The circulation of Bishop Watson's *Apology* in reply only served to spread the contagion, as it brought the issues before multitudes who would not otherwise have heard of them.<sup>2</sup> All the while, direct propaganda was carried on by translations and reprints as well as by fresh English tractates. Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion*, and Fréret's *Letter from Thrasybulus to*

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *Hist. of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. 1892, iii, 382.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 252-53.

*Leucippus*, seem to have been great favourites among the Painites, as was Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature*; and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* had a large vogue. Condorcet's *Esquisse* had been promptly translated in 1795; the translation of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* reached a third edition in 1817;<sup>1</sup> that of Raynal's *History* had been reprinted in 1804; and that of Helvétius *On the Mind* in 1810; while an English abridgment of Bayle in four volumes, on freethinking lines, appeared in 1826.

2. Meantime, new writers arose to carry into fuller detail the attacks of Paine, sharpening their weapons on those of the more scholarly French deists. A *Life of Jesus, including his Apocryphal History*,<sup>2</sup> was published in 1818, with such astute avoidance of all comment that it escaped prosecution. Others, taking a more daring course, fared accordingly. George Houston translated the *Ecce Homo* of d'Holbach, first publishing it at Edinburgh in 1799, and reprinting it in London in 1813. For the second issue he was prosecuted, fined £200, and imprisoned for two years in Newgate. Robert Wedderburn, a mulatto calling himself "the Rev.," in reality a superannuated journeyman tailor who officiated in Hopkins Street Unitarian Chapel, London, was in 1820 sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester Jail for a "blasphemous libel" contained in one of his pulpit discourses. His Letters to the Rev. Solomon Herschell (the Jewish Chief Rabbi) and to the Archbishop of Canterbury show a happy vein of orderly irony and not a little learning, despite his profession of apostolic ignorance; and at the trial the judge admitted his defence to be "exceedingly well drawn up." His publications naturally received a new impetus, and passed to a more drastic order of mockery.

3. As the years went on, the persecution in England grew still fiercer; but it was met with a stubborn hardihood which wore out even the bitter malice of piety. One of the worst features of the religious crusade was that it affected to attack not unbelief but "vice," such being the plea on which Wilberforce and others prosecuted, during a period of more than twenty years, the publishers and booksellers who issued the works of Paine.<sup>3</sup> But even that dissembling device did not ultimately avail. A name not to be

<sup>1</sup> This translation, issued by "Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster Row, and all booksellers," purports to be "with additions." The translation, however, has altered d'Holbach's atheism to deism.

<sup>2</sup> By W. Huttman. The book is "embellished with a head of Jesus"—a conventional religious picture. Huttman's opinions may be divined from the last sentence of his preface, alluding to "the high pretensions and inflated stile of the lives of Christ which issue periodically from the English press."

<sup>3</sup> Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 208-209.



forgotten by those who value obscure service to human freedom is that of RICHARD CARLILE, who between 1819 and 1835 underwent nine years' imprisonment in his unyielding struggle for the freedom of the Press, of thought, and of speech.<sup>1</sup> John Clarke, an ex-Methodist, became one of Carlile's shopmen, was tried in 1824 for selling one of his publications, and "after a spirited defence, in which he read many of the worst passages of the Bible," was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and to find securities for good behaviour during life. The latter disability he effectively anticipated by writing, while in prison, *A Critical Review of the Life, Character, and Miracles of Jesus*, wherein Christian feelings were treated as Christians had treated the feelings of freethinkers, with a much more destructive result. Published first, strangely enough, in the *Newgate Magazine*, it was republished in 1825 and 1839, with impunity. Thus did a brutal bigotry bring upon itself ever a deadlier retaliation, till it sickened of the contest. Those who threw up the struggle on the orthodox side declaimed as before about the tone of the unbeliever's attack, failing to read the plain lesson that, while noisy fanaticism, doing its own worst and vilest, deterred from utterance all the gentler and more sympathetic spirits on the side of reason, the work of reason could be done only by the harder natures, which gave back blow for blow and insult for insult, rejoicing in the encounter. Thus championed, freethought could not be crushed. The propagandist and publishing work done by Carlile was carried on diversely by such free lances as ROBERT TAYLOR (ex-clergyman, author of the *Diegesis*, 1829, and *The Devil's Pulpit*, 1830), CHARLES SOUTHWELL (1814-1860), and William Hone,<sup>2</sup> who ultimately became an independent preacher. Southwell, a disciple of Robert Owen, who edited *The Oracle of Reason*, was imprisoned for a year in 1840 for publishing in that journal an article entitled "The Jew Book"; and was succeeded in the editorship by GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE (1817-1906), another Owenite missionary, who met a similar sentence; whereafter George Adams and his wife, who continued to publish the journal, were imprisoned in turn. Matilda Roalfe and Mrs. Emma Martin about

<sup>1</sup> See Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*, ed. 1877, ii, 87, and Mrs. Carlile Campbell's *The Battle of the Press* (Bonner, 1899), passim, as to the treatment of those who acted as Carlile's shopmen. Women were imprisoned as well as men—e.g. SUSANNA WRIGHT, as to whom see Wheeler's *Dictionary*, and last ref. Carlile's wife and sister were likewise imprisoned with him; and over twenty volunteer shopmen in all went to jail.

<sup>2</sup> Hone's most important service to popular culture was his issue of the *Apocryphal New Testament*, which, by co-ordinating work of the same kind, gave a fresh scientific basis to the popular criticism of the gospel history. As to his famous trial for blasphemy on the score of his having published certain parodies, political in intention, see bk. i, ch. x (by Knight) of Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*.

the same period underwent imprisonment for like causes.<sup>1</sup> In this fashion, by the steady courage of a much-enduring band of men and women, was set on foot a systematic Secularist propaganda—the name having relation to the term "Secularism," coined by Holyoake.

4. In this evolution political activities played an important part. Henry Hetherington (1792-1849), the strenuous democrat who in 1830 began the trade union movement, and so became the founder of Chartism, fought for the right of publication in matters of free-thought as in politics. After undergoing two imprisonments of six months each (1832), and carrying on for three and a half years the struggle for an untaxed Press, which ended in his victory (1834), he was in 1840 indicted for publishing *Haslam's Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations*, a freethinking criticism of Old Testament morality. He defended himself so ably that Lord Denman, the judge, confessed to have "listened with feelings of great interest and sentiments of respect too"; and Justice Talfourd later spoke of the defence as marked by "great propriety and talent." Nevertheless, he was punished by four months' imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> In the following year, on the advice of Francis Place, he brought a test prosecution for blasphemy against Moxon, the poet-publisher, for issuing Shelley's complete works, including *Queen Mab*. Talfourd, then Serjeant, defended Moxon, and pleaded that there "must be some alteration of the law, or some restriction of the right to put it in action"; but the jury were impartial enough to find the publisher guilty, though he received no punishment.<sup>3</sup> Among other works published by Hetherington was one entitled *A Hunt after the Devil*, "by Dr. P. Y." (really by Lieutenant Lecount), in which the story of Noah's ark was subjected to a destructive criticism.<sup>4</sup>

5. Holyoake had been a missionary and martyr in the movement of Socialism set up by ROBERT OWEN, whose teaching, essentially scientific on its psychological or philosophical side, was the first effort to give systematic effect to democratic ideals by organizing industry. It was in the discussions of the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," formed by Owen in 1835, that the word "Socialism" first became current.<sup>5</sup> Owen was a freethinker in all things;<sup>6</sup> and his whole movement was so penetrated by an anti-theological spirit that the clergy as a rule became its bitter enemies, though such publicists as Macaulay and John Mill also combined

<sup>1</sup> Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 109-10. See p. 111 as to other cases.

<sup>2</sup> Art. by Holyoake in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. *Sixty Years*, per index.

<sup>3</sup> Articles in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

<sup>4</sup> Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, 1892, p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> "From an early age he had lost all belief in the prevailing forms of religion" (Kirkup, p. 59).

<sup>6</sup> Holyoake, *Sixty Years*, i, 47.



with them in scouting it on political and economic grounds.<sup>1</sup> Up till the middle of 1817 he had on his side a large body of "respectable" and highly-placed philanthropists, his notable success in his own social and commercial undertakings being his main recommendation. His early *Essays on the Formation of Character*, indeed, were sufficient to reveal his heterodoxy; but not until, at his memorable public meeting on August 21, 1817, he began to expatiate on "the gross errors that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men"<sup>2</sup> did he rank as an aggressive freethinker. It was in his own view the turning-point of his life. He was not prosecuted; though Brougham declared that if any politician had said half as much he would have been "burned alive"; but the alienation of "moderate" opinion at once began; and Owen, always more fervid than prudent, never recovered his influence among the upper classes. Nonetheless, "his secularistic teaching gained such influence among the working classes as to give occasion for the statement in the *Westminster Review* (1839) that his principles were the actual creed of a great portion of them."<sup>3</sup>

Owen's polemic method—if it could properly be so called—was not so much a criticism of dogma as a calm impeachment of religion in a spirit of philanthropy. No reformer was ever more entirely free from the spirit of wrath: on this side Owen towers above comparison. "There is no place found in him for scorn or indignation. He cannot bring himself to speak or think evil of any man. He carried out in his daily life his own teaching that man is not the proper object of praise or blame. Throughout his numerous works there is hardly a sentence of indignation—of personal denunciation never. He loves the sinner, and can hardly bring himself to hate the sin."<sup>4</sup> He had come by his rationalism through the influence rather of Rousseau than of Voltaire; and he had assimilated the philosophic doctrine of determinism—of all ideals the most difficult to realize in conduct—with a thoroughness of which the flawed Rousseau was incapable. There was thus presented to the world the curious case of a man who on the side of character carried rationalism to the perfection of ideal "saintliness," while in the general application of rational thought to concrete problems he was virtually unteachable. For an absolute and immovable conviction

<sup>1</sup> Reformers of almost all schools, indeed, from the first regarded Owen with more or less genial incredulity, some criticizing him acutely without any ill-will. See Podmore's *Robert Owen*, 1906, i, 238-42. Southey was one of the first to detect his lack of religious belief. *Id.* p. 222, n.

<sup>2</sup> Podmore, i, 246.

<sup>3</sup> Kirkup, as cited, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Podmore, ii, 640.

in his own practical rightness was in Owen as essential a constituent as his absolute benevolence.<sup>1</sup> These were the two poles of his personality. He was, in short, a fair embodiment of the ideal formed by many people—doctrine and dogma apart—of the Gospel Jesus. And most Christians accordingly shunned and feared or hated him.

Such a personality was evidently a formidable force as against the reinforced English orthodoxy of the first generation of the nineteenth century. The nature of Owen's propaganda as against religion may be best sampled from his lecture, "*The New Religion: or, Religion founded on the Immutable Laws of the Universe, contrasted with all Religions founded on Human Testimony*," delivered at the London Tavern on October 20, 1830:<sup>2</sup>—

"Under the arrangements which have hitherto existed for educating and governing man, four general characters have been produced among the human race. These four characters appear to be formed, under the past and present arrangements of society, from four different original organizations at birth.....

"No. 1. May be termed the conscientious religious in all countries.

"No. 2. Unbelievers in the truth of any religion, but who strenuously support the religion of their country, under the conviction that, although religion is not necessary to insure their own good conduct, it is eminently required to compel others to act right.

"No. 3. Unbelievers who openly avow their disbelief in the truth of any religion, such as Deists, Atheists, Skeptics, etc., etc., but who do not perceive the laws of nature relative to man as an individual, or when united in a social state.

"No. 4. Disbelievers in all past and present religions, but believers in the eternal unchanging laws of the universe, as developed by facts derived from all past experience; and who, by a careful study of these facts, deduce from them the religion of nature.

"Class No. 1 is formed, under certain circumstances, from those original organizations which possess at birth strong moral and weak intellectual faculties.....Class No. 2 is composed of those individuals who by nature possess a smaller quantity of moral and a larger quantity of intellectual faculty.....Class No. 3 is composed of men of strong moral and moderate intellectual faculty.....Class No. 4 comprises those who, by nature, possess a high degree of intellectual and moral faculty....."

Thus all forms of opinion were shown to proceed either from intellectual or moral defect, save the opinions of Owen. Such

<sup>1</sup> "Extraordinary self-complacency," "autocratic action," "arrogance," are among the expressions used of him by his ablest biographer. (Podmore, ii, 641.) Of him might be said, as of Emerson by himself, "the children of the Gods do not argue"—the faculty being absent.

<sup>2</sup> Pamphlet sold at 1½d., and "to be had of all the Booksellers."



propositions, tranquilly elaborated, were probably as effective in producing irritation as any frontal attack upon any dogmas, narratives, or politics. But, though not even consistent (inasmuch as the fundamental thesis that "character is formed by circumstances" is undermined by the datum of four varieties of organization), they were potent to influence serious men otherwise broadly instructed as to the nature of religious history and the irrationality of dogma; and Owen for a generation, despite the inevitable failure and frustration of his social schemes, exercised by his movement a very wide influence on popular life. To a considerable extent it was furthered by the popular deistic philosophy of GEORGE and ANDREW COMBE—a kind of deistic positivism—which then had a great vogue;<sup>1</sup> and by the implications of phrenology, then also in its most scientific and progressive stage. When, for various reasons, Owen's movement dissolved, the freethinking element seems to have been absorbed in the secular party, while the others appear to have gone in large part to build up the movement of Co-operation. On the whole, the movement of popular freethought in England could be described as poor, struggling, and persecuted, only the most hardy and zealous venturing to associate themselves with it. The imprisonment of Holyoake (1842) for six months, on a trifling charge of blasphemy, is an illustration of the brutal spirit of public orthodoxy at the time.<sup>2</sup> Where bigotry could thus only injure and oppress without suppressing heresy, it stimulated resistance; and the result of the stimulus was a revival of popular propaganda which led to the founding of a Secular Society in 1852.

6. This date broadly coincides with the maximum domination of conventional orthodoxy in English life. From about the middle of the century the balance gradually changes. In 1852 we find the publisher Henry Bohn reissuing the worthless apologetic works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, with a "publisher's preface" in which they are said to "maintain an acknowledged pre-eminence," though written "at a period of our national history when the writings of Volney and Gibbon, and especially of Thomas Paine, fostered by the political effects of the French Revolution, had deteriorated the morals of the people, and infused the poison of infidelity into the disaffected portion of the public." We have here still the note of early-nineteenth-century Anglican respectability, not easily to be matched in human history for hollowness and blatancy. Fuller is

<sup>1</sup> Of George Combe's *Constitution of Man* (1828), a deistic work, over 50,000 copies were sold in Britain within twelve years, and 10,000 in America. Advt. to 4th ed. 1839. Combe avows that his impulse came from the phrenologist Spurzheim.

<sup>2</sup> See the details in his *Last Trial by Jury for Atheism in England*.

at once one of the most rabid and one of the most futile of the thousand and one defenders of the faith. A sample of his mind and method is the verdict that "If the light that is gone abroad on earth would permit the rearing of temples to Venus, or Bacchus, or any of the rabble of heathen deities, there is little doubt but that modern unbelievers would in great numbers become their devotees; but, seeing they cannot have a God whose worship shall accord with their inclinations, they seem determined not to worship at all."<sup>1</sup> In the very next year the same publisher began the issue of a reprint of Gibbon, with variorum notes, edited by "An English Churchman," who for the most part defended Gibbon against his orthodox critics. This enterprise in turn brought upon the pious publisher a fair share of odium. But the second half of the century, albeit soon darkened by new wars in Europe, Asia, and America, was to be for England one of Liberalism alike in politics and in thought, free trade, and relatively free publication, with progress in enlightenment for both the populace and the "educated" classes.

7. In 1858 there was elected to the presidency of the London Secular Society the young CHARLES BRADLAUGH, one of the greatest orators of his age, and one of the most powerful personalities ever associated with a progressive movement. Early experience of clerical persecution, which even drove the boy from his father's roof, helped to make him a fighter, but never infirmed his humanity. In the main self-taught, he acquired a large measure of culture in French and English, and his rare natural gift for debate was sharpened by a legal training. A personal admirer of Owen, he never accepted his social polity, but was at all times the most zealous of democratic reformers. Thenceforward the working masses in England were in large part kept in touch with a freethought which drew on the results of the scientific and scholarly research of the time, and wielded a dialectic of which trained opponents confessed the power.<sup>2</sup> In the place of the bland dogmatism of Owen, and the calm assumption that all mankind could and should be schoolmastered into happiness and order, there came the alert recognition of the absoluteness of individualism as regards conviction, and its present pre-potency as regards social arrangements. Every thesis was brought to the test of argument and evidence; and in due course many who had complained that Owen would not

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel its Own Witness*, 1799, rep. in Bohn's ed. of *The Principal Works and Remains of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1852, pp. 136-37.

<sup>2</sup> See Prof. Flint's tribute to the reasoning power of Bradlaugh and Holyoake in his *Anti-Theistic Theories*, 4th ed. pp. 518-19.



argue, complained that the new school argued everything. The essential thing was that the people were receiving vitally needed instruction; and were being taught with a new power to think for themselves. Incidentally they were freed from an old burden by Bradlaugh's successful resistance to the demand of suretyship from newspapers, and by his no less successful battle for the right of non-theistic witnesses to make affirmation instead of taking the oath in the law courts.<sup>1</sup>

The inspiration and the instruction of the popular movement thus maintained were at once literary, scientific, ethical, historical, scholarly, and philosophic. Shelley was its poet; Voltaire its first story-teller; and Gibbon its favourite historian. In philosophy, Bradlaugh learned less from Hume than from Spinoza; in Biblical criticism—himself possessing a working knowledge of Hebrew—he collated the work of English and French specialists, down to and including Colenso, applying all the while to the consecrated record the merciless tests of a consistent ethic. At the same time, the whole battery of argument from the natural sciences was turned against traditionalism and supernaturalism, alike in the lectures of Bradlaugh and the other speakers of his party, and in the pages of his journal, *The National Reformer*. The general outcome was an unprecedented diffusion of critical thought among the English masses, and a proportionate antagonism to those who had wrought such a result. When, therefore, Bradlaugh, as deeply concerned for political as for intellectual righteousness, set himself to the task of entering Parliament, he commenced a struggle which shortened his life, though it promoted his main objects. Not till after a series of electoral contests extending over twelve years was he elected for Northampton in 1880; and the House of Commons in a manner enacted afresh the long resistance made to him in that city.<sup>2</sup> When, however, on his election in 1880, the Conservative Opposition began the historic proceedings over the Oath question, they probably did even more to deepen and diffuse the popular freethought movement than Bradlaugh himself had done in the whole of his previous career. The process was furthered by the policy of prosecuting and imprisoning (1883) Mr. G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker*, under the Blasphemy Laws—a course not directly ventured on as against Bradlaugh, though it was sought to connect him with the publication of Mr. Foote's journal.

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*, i, 149, 288-89.

<sup>2</sup> For a full record see Part II of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*.

To this day it is common to give a false account of the origin of the episode, representing Bradlaugh as having "forced" his opinions on the attention of the House. Rather he strove unduly to avoid wounding religious feeling. Wont to make affirmation by law in the courts of justice, he held that the same law applied to the "oath of allegiance," and felt that it would be unseemly on his part to use the words of adjuration if he could legally affirm. On this point he expressly consulted the law officers of the Crown, and they gave the opinion that he had the legal right, which was his own belief as a lawyer. The faction called the "fourth party," however, saw an opportunity to embarrass the Gladstone Government by challenging the act of affirmation, and thus arose the protracted struggle. Only when a committee of the House decided that he could not properly affirm did Bradlaugh propose to take the oath, in order to take his seat.

The pretence of zeal for religion, made by the politicians who had raised the issue, was known by all men to be the merest hypocrisy. Lord Randolph Churchill, who distinguished himself by insisting on the moral necessity for a belief in "some divinity or other," is recorded to have professed a special esteem for Mr. (now Lord) Morley, the most distinguished Positivist of his time.<sup>1</sup> The whole procedure, in Parliament and out, was so visibly that of the lowest political malice, exploiting the crudest religious intolerance, that it turned into active freethinkers many who had before been only passive doubters, and raised the secularist party to an intensity of zeal never before seen. At no period in modern British history had there been so constant and so keen a platform propaganda of unbelief; so unsparing an indictment of Christian doctrine, history, and practice; such contemptuous rebuttal of every Christian pretension; such asperity of spirit against the creed which was once more being championed by chicanery, calumny, and injustice. In those five years of indignant warfare were sown the seeds of a more abundant growth of rationalism than had ever before been known in the British Islands. With invincible determination Bradlaugh fought his case through Parliament and the law courts, incurring debts which forced upon him further toils that clearly shortened his life, but never yielding for an instant in his battle with the bigotry of half the nation. Liberalism was shamed by many defections; Conservatism, with the assent of Mr. Balfour, was solid for injustice;<sup>2</sup> and in the entire Church of England less

<sup>1</sup> After Bradlaugh had secured his seat, the noble lord even sought his acquaintance.

<sup>2</sup> Though young Conservative members, after 1886, privately professed sympathy.



than a dozen priests stood for tolerance. But the cause at stake was indestructible. When Bradlaugh at length took the oath and his seat in 1886, under a ruling of the new Speaker (Peel) which stultified the whole action of the Speaker and majorities of the previous Parliament, and no less that of the law courts, straightforward freethought stood three-fold stronger in England than in any previous generation. Apart from their educative work, the struggles and sufferings of the secularist leaders won for Great Britain the abolition within one generation of the old burden of suretyship on newspapers, and of the disabilities of non-theistic witnesses; the freedom of public meeting in the London parks; the right of avowed atheists to sit in Parliament (Bradlaugh having secured in 1888 their title to make affirmation instead of oath); and the virtual discredit of the Blasphemy Laws as such. It is probable also that the treatment meted out to Mrs. BESANT—then associated with Bradlaugh in freethought propaganda—marked the end of another form of tyrannous outrage, already made historic in the case of Shelley. Secured the custody of her children under a marital deed of separation, she was deprived of it at law (1879) on her avowal of atheistic opinions, with the result that her influence as a propagandist was immensely increased.

8. The special energy of the English secularist movement in the ninth decade was partly due to the fact that by that time there had appeared a remarkable amount of modern freethinking literature of high literary and intellectual quality, and good "social" status. Down to 1870 the new literary names committed to the rejection of Christianity, apart from the men of science who kept to their own work, were the theists Hennell, F. W. Newman, W. R. Greg, R. W. Mackay, Buckle, and W. E. H. Lecky, all of them influential, but none of them at once recognized as a first-rate force. But with the appearance of Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865), lacking though it was in clearness of thought, a new tone began to prevail; and his *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869), equally readable and not more uncompromising, was soon followed by a series of powerful pronouncements of a more explicit kind. One of the first of the literary class to come forward with an express impeachment of Christianity was MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY, whose *Earthward Pilgrimage* (1870) was the artistic record of a gifted preacher's progress from Wesleyan Methodism, through Unitarianism, to a theism which was soon to pass into agnosticism. In 1871 appeared the remarkable work of WINWOOD READE, *The*

*Martyrdom of Man*, wherein a rapid survey of ancient and medieval history, and of the growth of religion from savage beginnings, leads up to a definitely anti-theistic presentment of the future of human life with the claim to have shown "that the destruction of Christianity is essential to the interests of civilization."<sup>1</sup> Some eighteen editions tell of the acceptance won by the book. Less vogue, but some startled notice, was won by the Duke of Somerset's *Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism* (1872), a work of moderate rationalism, but by a peer. In 1873 appeared HERBERT SPENCER'S *Introduction to the Study of Sociology*, wherein the implicit anti-supernaturalism of that philosopher's *First Principles* was advanced upon, in the chapter on "The Theological Bias," by a mordant attack on that Christian creed.

That attack had been preceded by Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* (1872), wherein the publicist who had censured Colenso for not writing in Latin described the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as "the fairy-tale of three Lord Shaftesburys." Much pleading for the recognition by unbelievers of the value of the Bible failed to convince Christians of the value of such a thinker's Christianity. A more important sensation was provided in 1873 by the posthumous publication of Mill's *Autobiography*, and, in the following year, by his *Three Essays on Religion*, which exhibited its esteemed author as not only not a Christian but as never having been one, although he formulated a species of limited liability theism, as unsatisfactory to the rationalists as to the orthodox. Still the fresh manifestations of freethinking multiplied. On the one hand the massive treatise entitled *Supernatural Religion* (1874), and on the other the freethinking essays of Prof. W. K. Clifford in the *Fortnightly Review*, the most vigorously outspoken ever yet written by an English academic, showed that the whole field of debate was being reopened with a new power and confidence. The *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, by Leslie Stephen (1876), set up the same impression from another side; yet another social sensation was created by the appearance of Viscount AMBERLEY'S *Analysis of Religious Belief* (1877); and all the while the "Higher Criticism" proceeded within the pale of the Church.

The literary situation was now so changed that, whereas from 1850 to 1880 the "sensations" in the religious world were those made by rationalistic attacks, thereafter they were those made by new defences. H. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1883), Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Work cited, p. 524.



Balfour's *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* (1879) and *Foundations of Belief* (1895), and Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894), were successively welcomed as being declared to render such a service. It is doubtful whether they are to-day valued upon that score in any quarter.

9. In the first half of the century popular forms of freethought propaganda were hardly possible in other European countries. France had been too long used to regulation alike under the monarchy and under the empire to permit of open promotion of unbelief in the early years of the Restoration. Yet as early as 1828 we find the Protestant Coquerel avowing that in his day the Bourbonism of the Catholic clergy had revived the old anti-clericalism, and that it was common to find the most high-minded patriots unbelievers and materialists.<sup>1</sup> But still more remarkable was the persistence of deep freethinking currents in the Catholic world throughout the century. About 1830 rationalism had become normal among the younger students at Paris;<sup>2</sup> and the revolution of that year elicited a charter putting all religions on an equality.<sup>3</sup> Soon the throne and the chambers were on a footing of practical hostility to the Church.<sup>4</sup> Under Louis Philippe men dared to teach in the Collège de France that "the Christian dispensation is but one link in the chain of divine revelations to man."<sup>5</sup> Even during the first period of reaction after the restoration numerous editions of Volney's *Ruines* and of the *Abrégé*<sup>6</sup> of Dupuis's *Origine de tous les Cultes* served to maintain among the more intelligent of the proletariat an almost scientific rationalism, which can hardly be said to have been improved on by such historiography as that of Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. And there were other forces, over and above freemasonry, which in France and other Latin countries has since the Revolution been steadily anti-clerical. The would-be social reconstructor CHARLES FOURIER (1772-1837) was an independent and non-Christian though not an anti-clerical theist, and his system may have counted for something as organizing the secular spirit among the workers in the period of the monarchic and Catholic reaction. Fourier approximated to Christianity inasmuch as he believed in a divine Providence; but like Owen he had an unbounded and heterodox faith in human

<sup>1</sup> Coquerel, *Essai sur l'histoire générale du christianisme*, 1828, préf.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 75-77.

<sup>3</sup> "The miserable and deistical principle of the equality of all religions" (*id.* p. 188). Cp. pp. 151, 153.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 157-61. As to the general vogue of rationalism in France at that period, see pp. 35, 204; and compare Saisset, *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845; *The Progress of Religious Thought as illustrated in the Protestant Church of France*, by Dr. J. R. Beard, 1861; and Wilson's article in *Essays and Reviews*. As to Switzerland and Holland, see Pearson, *Infidelity, its Aspects*, etc., 1853, pp. 560-64, 575-84.

<sup>5</sup> Louis Philippe sought to suppress this book, of which many editions had appeared before 1830. See Blanco White's *Life*, 1845, ii, 168.

goodness and perfectibility; and he claimed to have discovered the "plan of God" for men. But Fourier was never, like Owen, a popular force; and popular rationalism went on other lines. At no time was the proletariat of Paris otherwise than largely Voltairean after the Revolution, of which one of the great services (carried on by Napoleon) was an improvement in popular education. The rival non-Christian systems of SAINT-SIMON (1760-1823) and AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857) also never took any practical hold among them; but throughout the century they have been fully the most free-thinking working-class population in the world.

As to Fourier see the *Œuvres Choisies de Fourier*, ed. Ch. Gide, pp. 1-3, 9. Cp. *Solidarité: Vue Synthétique sur la doctrine de Ch. Fourier*, par Hippolyte Renaud, 3e édit. 1846, ch. i: "Pour ramener l'homme à la foi" [en Dieu], writes Renaud, "il faut lui offrir aujourd'hui une foi complète et composée, une foi solidement assise sur le témoignage de la raison. Pour cela il faut que la flambeau de la science dissipe toutes les obscurités" (p. 9). This is not propitious to dogma; but Fourier planned and promised to leave priests and ministers undisturbed in his new world, and even declared religions to be "much superior to uncertain sciences." Gide, introd. to *Œuvres Choisies*, pp. xxii-xxiii, citing Manuscripts, vol. de 1853-1856, p. 293. Cp. Dr. Ch. Pellarin, *Fourier, sa vie et sa théorie*, 5e édit. p. 143.

Saint-Simon, who proposed a "new Christianity," expressly guarded against direct appeals to the people. See Weil, *Saint-Simon et son Œuvre*, 1894, p. 193. As to the Saint-Simonian sect, see an interesting testimony by Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 148.

The generation after the fall of Napoleon was pre-eminently the period of new schemes of society; and it is noteworthy that they were all non-Christian, though all, including even Owen's, claimed to provide a "religion," and the French may seem all to have been convinced by Napoleon's practice that some kind of cult must be provided for the peoples. Owen alone rejected alike supernaturalism and cultus; and his movement left the most definite rationalistic traces. All seem to have been generated by the double influence of (1) the social failure of the French Revolution, which left so many anxious for another and better effort at reconstruction, and (2) of the spectacle of the rule of Napoleon, which seems to have elicited new ideals of beneficent autocracy. Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, and Comte were all alike would-be founders of a new society or social religion. It seems probable that this proclivity to systematic reconstruction, in a world which still carried a panic-memory of one great social overturn, helped to lengthen the rule of orthodoxy.



Considerably more progress was made when freethought became detached from special plans of polity, and grew up anew by way of sheer truth-seeking on all the lines of inquiry.

In France, however, the freethinking tradition from the eighteenth century never passed away, at least as regards the life of the great towns. And while Napoleon III made it his business to conciliate the Church, which in the person of the somewhat latitudinarian Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, had endorsed his *coup d'état* of 1851,<sup>1</sup> even under his rule the irreversible movement of freethought revealed itself among his own ministers. Victor Duruy, the eminent historian, his energetic Minister of Education, was a freethinker, non-aggressive towards the Church, but perfectly determined not to permit aggression by it.<sup>2</sup> And when the Church, in its immemorial way, declaimed against all forms of rationalistic teaching in the colleges, and insisted on controlling the instruction in all the schools,<sup>3</sup> his firm resistance made him one of its most hated antagonists. Even in the Senate, then the asylum of all forms of antiquated thought and prejudice, Duruy was able to carry his point against the prelates, Sainte-Beuve strongly and skilfully supporting him.<sup>4</sup> Thus in the France of the Third Empire, on the open field of the educational battle-ground between faith and reason, the rationalistic advance was apparent in administration no less than in the teaching of the professed men of science and the polemic of the professed critics of religion.

10. In other Catholic countries the course of popular culture in the first half of the century was not greatly dissimilar to that seen in France, though less rapid and expansive. Thus we find the Spanish Inquisitor-General in 1815 declaring that "all the world sees with horror the rapid progress of unbelief," and denouncing "the errors and the new and dangerous doctrines" which have passed from other countries to Spain.<sup>5</sup> This evolution was to some extent checked; but in the latter half of the century, especially in the last thirty years, all the Catholic countries of Europe were more or less permeated with demotic freethought, usually going hand in hand with republican or socialistic propaganda in politics. It is indeed a significant fact that freethought propaganda is often most active in countries where the Catholic Church is most powerful. Thus in Belgium there are at least three separate federations,

<sup>1</sup> Prof. E. Lavisse, *Un Ministre: Victor Duruy*, 1895 (rep. of art. in *Revue de Paris*, Janv. 15 and Mars 1, 1895), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 99-105.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 107-118.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 118-27.

<sup>5</sup> Llorente, *Hist. crit. de l'Inquisition de l'Espagne*, 2e édit. iv, 153.

standing for hundreds of freethinking "groups"; in Spain, a few years ago, there were freethought societies in all the large towns, and at least half-a-dozen freethought journals; in Portugal there have been a number of societies—a weekly journal, *O Secolo*, of Lisbon, and a monthly review, *O Livre Exame*. In France and Italy, where educated society is in large measure rationalistic, the Masonic lodges do most of the personal and social propaganda; but there are federations of freethought societies in both countries. In Switzerland freethought is more aggressive in the Catholic than in the Protestant cantons.<sup>1</sup> In the South American republics, again, as in Italy and France, the Masonic lodges are predominantly freethinking; and in Peru there was, a few years ago, a Freethought League, with a weekly organ. As long ago as 1856 the American diplomatist and archæologist, Squier, wrote that, "Although the people of Honduras, in common with those of Central America in general, are nominally Catholics, yet, among those capable of reflection or possessed of education, there are more who are destitute of any fixed creed—Rationalists or, as they are sometimes called, Freethinkers, than adherents of any form of religion."<sup>2</sup> That the movement is also active in the other republics of the southern continent may be inferred from the facts that a Positivist organization has long subsisted in Brazil; that its members were active in the peaceful revolution which there substituted a republic for a monarchy; and that at the Freethought Congresses of Rome and Paris in 1904 and 1905 there was an energetic demand for a Congress at Buenos Aires, which was finally agreed to for 1906.

While popular propaganda is hardly possible save on political lines, freethinking journalism has counted for much in the most Catholic parts of Southern Europe. The influence of such journals is to be measured not by their circulation, which is never great, but by their keeping up a habit of more or less instructed freethinking among readers, to many of whom the instruction is not otherwise easily accessible. Probably the least ambitious of them is an intellectual force of a higher order than the highest grade of popular religious journalism; while some of the stronger, as *De Dageraad* of Amsterdam, have ranked as high-class serious reviews. In the more free and progressive countries, however, freethought affects all periodical literature; and in France it partly permeates the ordinary newspapers. In England, where a series of monthly or weekly publications of an emphatically freethinking sort has been

<sup>1</sup> *Rapport* of Ch. Fulpius in the *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Squier, *Notes on Central America*, 1856, p. 227.



nearly continuous from about 1840,<sup>1</sup> new ones rising in place of those which succumbed to the commercial difficulties, such periodicals suffer an economic pinch in that they cannot hope for much income from advertisements, which are the chief sustenance of popular journals and magazines. The same law holds elsewhere; but in England and America the high-priced reviews have been gradually opened to rationalistic articles, the way being led by the English *Westminster Review*<sup>2</sup> and *Fortnightly Review*, both founded with an eye to freer discussion.

Among the earlier freethinking periodicals may be noted *The Republican*, 1819-26 (edited by Carlile); *The Deist's Magazine*, 1820; *The Lion*, 1828 (Carlile); *The Prompter*, 1830 (Carlile); *The Gauntlet*, 1833 (Carlile); *The Atheist and Republican*, 1841-42; *The Blasphemer*, 1842; *The Oracle of Reason* (founded by Southwell), 1842, etc.; *The Reasoner and Herald of Progress* (largely conducted by Holyoake), 1846-1861; *Cooper's Journal; or, unfettered Thinker*, etc., 1850, etc.; *The Movement*, 1843; *The Freethinker's Information for the People* (undated: after 1840); *Freethinker's Magazine*, 1850, etc.; *London Investigator*, 1854, etc. Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, begun in 1860, lasted till 1893. Mr. Foote's *Freethinker*, begun in 1881, still subsists. Various freethinking monthlies have risen and fallen since 1880—e.g., *Our Corner*, edited by Mrs. Besant, 1883-88; *The Liberal and Progress*, edited by Mr. Foote, 1879-87; the *Free Review*, transformed into the *University Magazine*, 1893-1898. The *Reformer*, a monthly, edited by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, subsisted from 1897 to 1904. *The Literary Guide*, which began as a small sheet in 1885, flourishes. Since 1900, a popular Socialist journal, *The Clarion*, has declared for rationalism through the pen of its editor, Mr. R. Blatchford ("Nunquam"), whose polemic has caused much controversy. For a generation back, further, rationalistic essays have appeared from time to time not only in the *Fortnightly Review* (founded by G. H. Lewes, and long edited by Mr. John (now Lord) Morley, much of whose writing on the French *philosophes* appeared in its pages), but in the *Nineteenth Century*, wherein was carried on, for instance, the famous controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Prof. Huxley. In the early 'seventies, the *Cornhill Magazine*, under the editorship of Leslie Stephen,

<sup>1</sup> Before 1840 the popular freethought propaganda had been partly carried on under cover of Radicalism, as in Carlile's *Republican*, and *Lion*, and in various publications of William Hone. Cp. H. B. Wilson's article "The National Church," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Described as "our chief atheistic organ" by the late F. W. Newman "because Dr. James Martineau declined to continue writing for it, because it interpolated atheistical articles between his theistic articles" (*Contributions.....to the early history of the late Cardinal Newman*, 1891, p. 103). The review was for a time edited by J. S. Mill, and for long after him by Dr. John Chapman. It lasted into the twentieth century, under the editorship of Dr. Chapman's widow, and kept a free platform to the end.

issued serially Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* and *St. Paul and Protestantism*. In the latter years of the century quite a number of reviews, some of them short-lived, gave space to advanced opinions. But propaganda has latterly become more and more a matter of all-pervading literary influence, the immense circulation of the sixpenny reprints of the R. P. A. having put the advanced literature of the last generation within the reach of all.

11. In Germany, as we have seen, the relative selectness of culture, the comparative aloofness of the "enlightened" from the mass of the people, made possible after the War of Independence a certain pietistic reaction, in the absence of any popular propagandist machinery or purpose on the side of the rationalists. In the opinion of an evangelical authority, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "through modern enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) the people had become indifferent to the Church; the Bible was regarded as a merely human book, the Saviour merely as a person who had lived and taught long ago, not as one whose almighty presence is with his people still."<sup>1</sup> According to the same authority, "before the war, the indifference to the word of God which prevailed among the upper classes had penetrated to the lower; but after it, a desire for the Scriptures was everywhere felt."<sup>2</sup> This involves an admission that the "religion of the heart" propounded by Schleiermacher in his addresses *On Religion* "to the educated among its despisers"<sup>3</sup> (1799) was not really a Christian revival at all. Schleiermacher himself in 1803 declared that in Prussia there was almost no attendance on public worship, and the clergy had fallen into profound discredit.<sup>4</sup> A pietistic movement had, however, begun during the period of the French ascendancy;<sup>5</sup> and seeing that the freethinking of the previous generation had been in part associated with French opinion, it was natural that on this side anti-French feeling should promote a reversion to older and more "national" forms of feeling. Thus after the fall of Napoleon the tone of the students who had fought in the war seems to have been more religious than that of previous years.<sup>6</sup> Inasmuch, however, as the "enlightenment" of the scholarly class was maintained, and

<sup>1</sup> Pastor W. Baur, Hamburg, *Religious Life in Germany during the Wars of Independence*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 41. H. J. Rose and Pusey, in their controversy as to the causes of German rationalism, were substantially at one on this point of fact. Rose, *Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1829, pp. 19, 150, 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*. These are discussed hereinafter.

<sup>3</sup> Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.* Eng. tr. 1889, pp. 122-23.

<sup>4</sup> See the same volume, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Karl von Raumer, *Contrib. to the Hist. of the German Universities*, Eng. tr. 1859, p. 79. The intellectual tone of W. Baur and K. von Raumer certainly protects them from any charge of "enlightenment."



applied anew to critical problems, the religious revival did not turn back the course of progress. "When the third centenary commemoration, in 1817, of the Reformation approached, the Prussian people were in a state of stolid indifference, apparently, on religious matters."<sup>1</sup> Alongside of the pietistic reaction of the Liberation period there went on an open ecclesiastical strife, dating from an anti-rationalist declaration by the Court preacher Reinhard at Dresden in 1811,<sup>2</sup> between the rationalists or "Friends of Light" and the Scripturalists of the old school; and the effect was a general disintegration of orthodoxy, despite, or it may be largely in virtue of, the governmental policy of rewarding the Pietists and discouraging their opponents in the way of official appointments.<sup>3</sup> The Prussian measure (1817) of forcibly uniting the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches, with a neutral sacramental ritual in which the eucharist was treated as a historical commemoration, tended to the same consequences, though it also revived old Lutheran zeal;<sup>4</sup> and when the new revolutionary movement broke out in 1848, popular feeling was substantially non-religious. "In the south of Germany especially the conflict of political opinions and revolutionary tendencies produced, in the first instance, an entire prostration of religious sentiment." The bulk of society showed entire indifference to worship, the churches being everywhere deserted; and "atheism was openly avowed, and Christianity ridiculed as the invention of priestcraft."<sup>5</sup> One result was a desperate effort of the clergy to "effect a union among all who retained any measure of Christian belief, in order to raise up their national religion and faith from the lowest state into which it has ever fallen since the French Revolution."

But the clerical effort evoked a counter effort. Already, in 1846, official interference with freedom of utterance led to the formation of a "free religious" society by Dr. Rupp, of Königsberg, one of the "Friends of Light" in the State Church; and he was followed by Wislicenus of Halle, a Hegelian, and by Uhlich of Magdeburg.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the determined pressure, social and official, which ensued on the collapse of the revolution of 1848, these societies failed to develop on the scale of their beginnings; and that of Magdeburg, which at the outset had 7,000 members, has latterly only 500; though that of Berlin has nearly 4,000.<sup>7</sup> There is further a *Freidenker Bund*, with branches in many towns; and the two

<sup>1</sup> Laing, *Notes of a Traveller*, 1842, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Cotterill, *Relig. Movements of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, 1849, pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* pp. 27-28, 41-42.

<sup>4</sup> Cotterill, as cited, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Cotterill, as cited, pp. 43-47.

<sup>6</sup> Rapport de Ida Altmann, in *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906, p. 20.

organizations, with their total membership of some fifty thousand, may be held to represent the militant side of popular freethought in Germany. This, however, constitutes only a fraction of the total amount of passive rationalism. There is a large measure of enlightenment in both the working and the middle classes; and the ostensible force of orthodoxy among the official and conformist middle class is in many respects illusory. The German police laws put a rigid check on all manner of platform and press propaganda which could be indicted as hurting the feelings of religious people; so that a jest at the Holy Coat of Trèves could even in recent years send a journalist to jail, and the platform work of the militant societies is closely trammelled. Yet there are, or have been, over a dozen journals which so far as may be take the freethought side;<sup>1</sup> and the whole stress of Bismarckian reaction and of official orthodoxy under the present Kaiser has never availed to make the tone of popular thought pietistic. KARL MARX, the prophet of the German Socialist movement (1818-1883), laid it down as part of its mission "to free consciousness from the religious spectre"; and his two most influential followers in Germany, BEBEL and LIEBKNECHT, were avowed atheists, the former even going so far as to avow officially in the Reichstag that "the aim of our party is on the political plane the republican form of State; on the economic, Socialism; and on the plane which we term the religious, atheism";<sup>2</sup> though the party attempts no propaganda of the latter order. "Christianity and Social-Democracy," said Bebel again, "are opposed as fire and water."<sup>3</sup>

Some index to the amount of popular freethought that normally exists under the surface in Germany is furnished, further, by the strength of the German freethought movement in the United States, where, despite the tendency to the adoption of the common speech, there grew up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century many German freethinking societies, a German federation of atheists, and a vigorous popular organ, *Der Freidenker*.

Thus, under the sounder moral and economic conditions of the life of the proletariat in Germany, straightforward rationalism, as apart from propaganda, is becoming among them more and more the rule. The bureaucratic control of education forces religious

<sup>1</sup> The principal have been: *Das freie Wort* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Frankfurt-on-Main; *Der Freidenker*, Friedrichshagen, near Berlin; *Der freireligiöses Sonntagsblatt*, Breslau; *Die freie Gemeinde*, Magdeburg; *Der Atheist*, Nuremberg; *Menschentum*, Gotha; *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin; *Berliner Volkszeitung*, Berlin; *Vorwärts* (Socialist), Berlin; *Weser Zeitung*, Bremen; *Hartung'sche Zeitung*, Königsberg; *Kölnische Zeitung*, Cologne.

<sup>2</sup> Studemund, *Der moderne Unglaube in den unteren Ständen*, 1901, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 22.



teaching in the common schools; and there is no "conscience clause" for unbelieving parents.<sup>1</sup> A Protestant pastor at the end of the century made an investigation into the state of religious opinion among the working Socialists of some provincial towns and rural districts, and found everywhere a determined attitude of rationalism. The formula of the Social Democrats, "Religion is a private matter," he bitterly perceives to carry the implication "a private matter for the fools"; and while he holds that the belief in a speedy collapse of the Christian religion is latterly less common than formerly among the upper and middle classes, he complains that the Socialists are not similarly enlightened.<sup>2</sup> Bebel's drastic teaching as to the economic and social conditions of the rise of Christianity,<sup>3</sup> and the materialistic theory of history set forth by Marx and Engels, he finds generally accepted. Not only do most of the party leaders declare themselves to be without religion, but those who do not so declare themselves are so no less.<sup>4</sup> Nor is the unbelief a mere sequel to the Socialism: often the development is the other way.<sup>5</sup> The opinion is almost universal, further, that the clergy in general do not believe what they teach.<sup>6</sup> Atheists are numerous among the peasantry; more numerous among the workers in the provincial towns; and still more numerous in the large towns;<sup>7</sup> and while many take a sympathetic view of Jesus as a man and teacher, not a few deny his historic existence<sup>8</sup>—a view set forth in non-Socialist circles also.<sup>9</sup>

12. Under the widely-different political conditions in Russia and the Scandinavian States it is the more significant that in all alike rationalism is latterly common among the educated classes. In Norway the latter perhaps include a larger proportion of working people than can be so classed even in Germany; and rationalism is relatively hopeful, though social freedom is still far from perfect. It is the old story of toleration for a dangerously well-placed freethought, and intolerance for that which reaches the common people. In Russia rationalism has before it the task of transmuting a system of autocracy into one of self-government. In no European country, perhaps, is rationalism more general among the educated classes;

<sup>1</sup> A. D. McLaren, *An Australian in Germany*, 1911, pp. 181, 184.

<sup>2</sup> Studemund, *Der moderne Unglaube in den unteren Ständen*, 1901, pp. 17, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Glossen zu Yves Guyot's und Sigismund Lacroix's "Die wahre Gestalt des Christentums."*

<sup>4</sup> Studemund, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 40-42. Cp. p. 43. Pastor Studemund cites other inquirers, notably Rade, Gebhardt, Lorenz, and Dietzgen, all to the same effect.

<sup>7</sup> *E.g.* Pastor A. Kalthoff's *Was wissen wir von Jesus?* 1901. Since that date the opinion has found new and powerful supporters in Germany.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* pp. 37-38.

and in none is there a greater mass of popular ignorance.<sup>1</sup> The popular icon-worship in Moscow can hardly be paralleled outside of Asia. On the other hand, the aristocracy became Voltairean in the eighteenth century, and has remained more or less incredulous since, though it now joins hands with the Church; while the democratic movement, in its various phases of socialism, constitutionalism, and Nihilism, has been markedly anti-religious since the second quarter of the century.<sup>2</sup> Subsidiary revivals of mysticism, such as are chronicled in other countries, are of course to be seen in Russia; but the instructed class, the *intelligentsia*, is essentially naturalistic in its cast of thought. This state of things subsists despite the readiness of the government to suppress the slightest sign of official heterodoxy in the universities.<sup>3</sup> The struggle is thus substantially between the spirit of freedom and that of arbitrary rule; and the fortunes of freethought go with the former.

13. "Free-religious" societies, such as have been noted in Germany, may be rated as forms of moderate freethought propaganda, and are to be found in all Protestant countries, with all shades of development. A movement of the kind has existed for a number of years back in America, in the New England States and elsewhere, and may be held to represent a theistic or agnostic thought too advanced to adhere even to the Unitarianism which during the two middle quarters of the century was perhaps the predominant creed in New England. The Theistic Church conducted by the Rev. Charles Voysey after his expulsion from the Church of England in 1871 to his death in 1912, and since then by the Rev. Dr. Walter Walsh, is an example. Another type of such a gradual and peaceful evolution is the South Place Institute (formerly "Chapel") of London, where, under the famous orator W. J. Fox, nominally a Unitarian, there was preached between 1824 and 1852 a theism tending to pantheism, perhaps traceable to elements in the doctrine of Priestley, and passed on by Mr. Fox to Robert Browning.<sup>4</sup> In 1864 the charge passed to MONCURE D. CONWAY, under whom the congregation quietly advanced during twenty years from Unitarianism to a non-scriptural rationalism, embracing the shades of philosophic theism, agnosticism, and anti-theism. In Conway's *Lessons for the*

<sup>1</sup> "The people in the country do not read; in the towns they read little. The journals are little circulated. In Russia one never sees a cabman, an artisan, a labourer reading a newspaper" (Ivan Strannik, *La pensée russe contemporaine*, 1903, p. 5).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. E. Lavigne, *Introduction à l'histoire du nihilisme russe*, 1880, pp. 149, 161, 224; Arnaudo, *Le Nihilisme*, French trans. pp. 37, 58, 61, 63, 77, 86, etc.; Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, pp. 325-26, 338-39.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Priestley, *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, 2nd ed. 1771, pp. 257-61, and Conway's *Centenary History of South Place*, pp. 63, 77, 80.



*Day* will be found a series of peculiarly vivid mementos of that period, a kind of itinerary, more intimate than any retrospective record. The latter part of his life, partly preserved in one of the most interesting autobiographies of the century, was spent between England and the United States and in travel. After his first withdrawal to the States in 1884 the Institute became an open platform for rationalist and non-theological ethics and social and historical teaching, and it now stands as an "Ethical Society" in touch with the numerous groups so named which have come into existence in England in the last dozen years on lines originally laid down by Dr. Felix Adler in New York. At the time of the present writing the English societies of this kind number between twenty and thirty, the majority being in London and its environs. Their open adherents, who are some thousands strong, are in most cases non-theistic rationalists, and include many former members of the Secularist movement, of which the organization has latterly dwindled. On partly similar lines there were developed in provincial towns about the end of the century a small number of "Labour Churches," in which the tendency was to substitute a rationalist humanitarian ethic for supernaturalism; and the same lecturers frequently spoke from their platforms and from those of Ethical and Secularist societies. Of late, however, the Labour Churches have tended to disappear. All this means no resumption of church-going, but, by the confession of the Churches, a completer secularization of the Sunday.

14. Alongside of the lines of movement before sketched, there has subsisted in England during the greater part of the nineteenth century a considerable organization of Unitarianism. In the early years of the nineteenth century it was strong enough to obtain the repeal (1813) of the penal laws against anti-Trinitarianism, whereafter the use of the name "Unitarian" became more common, and a sect so called was founded formally in 1825. When the heretical preachers of the Presbyterian sect began openly to declare themselves as Unitarians, there naturally arose a protest from the orthodox, and an attempt was made in 1833 to save from its new destination the property owned by the heretical congregations.<sup>1</sup> This was frustrated by the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844, which gave to each group singly the power to interpret its trust in its own fashion. Thenceforward the sect prospered considerably, albeit not so greatly as in

<sup>1</sup> See Rev. Joseph Hunter, *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Henley's Foundations*, 1834; *The History, Opinions, and Present Legal Position of the English Presbyterians* (official), 1834; *An Examination and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. W. Hamilton Drummond, of Dublin, 1842.

the United States. During the century English Unitarianism has been associated with scholarship through such names as John Kenrick and Samuel Sharpe, the historians of Egypt, and J. J. Tayler; and, less directly, with philosophy in the person of Dr. James Martineau, who, however, was rather a coadjutor than a champion of the sect. In the United States the movement, greatly aided to popularity by the eloquent humanism of the two Channings, lost the prestige of the name of Emerson, who had been one of its ministers, by the inability of his congregation to go the whole way with him in his opinions. In 1853 Emerson told the young Moncure Conway that "the Unitarian Churches were stated to be no longer producing ministers equal to their forerunners, but were more and more finding their best men in those coming from orthodox Churches," who "would, of course, have some enthusiasm for their new faith."<sup>1</sup> Latterly Unitarians have been entitled to say that the Trinitarian Churches are approximating to their position.<sup>2</sup> Such an approach, however, involves rather a weakening than a strengthening of the smaller body; though some of its teachers are to the full as bigoted and embittered in their propaganda as the bulk of the traditionally orthodox. Others adhere to their ritual practices in the spirit of use and wont, as Emerson found when he sought to rationalize in his own Church the usage of the eucharist.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, numbers have passed from Unitarianism to thoroughgoing rationalism; and some whole congregations, following more or less the example of that of South Place Chapel, have latterly reached a position scarcely distinguishable from that of the Ethical Societies.

15. A partly similar evolution has taken place among the Protestant Churches of France, Switzerland, Hungary, and Holland. French Protestantism could not but be intellectually moved by the intense ferment of the Revolution; and, when finally secured against active oppression from the Catholic side, could not but develop an intellectual opposition to the Catholic Reaction after 1815. In Switzerland, always in intellectual touch with France and Germany, the tendencies which had been stamped as Socinian in the days of Voltaire soon reasserted themselves so strongly as to provoke fanatical reaction.<sup>4</sup> The nomination of Strauss to a chair of theology at Zürich by a Radical Government in 1839 actually gave rise to a violent revolt, inflamed and led by Protestant clergymen. The

<sup>1</sup> Conway, *Autobiography*, 1905, i, 123.

<sup>2</sup> So Prof. William James, *The Will to Believe*, etc., 1897, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Conway, *Emerson at Home and Abroad*, 1883, ch. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 1848, ii, 422. Rationalism seems to have spread soonest in the canton of Zürich. *Id.* ii, 427.



Executive Council were expelled, and a number of persons killed in the strife.<sup>1</sup> In the canton of Aargau in 1841, again, the cry of "religion in danger" sufficed to bring about a Catholic insurrection against a Liberal Council; and yet again in 1844 it led, among the Catholics of the Valais canton, to the bloodiest insurrection of all. Since these disgraceful outbreaks the progress of Rationalism in Switzerland has been steady. In 1847 a chair was given at Berne to the rationalistic scholar Zeller, without any such resistance as was made to Strauss at Zürich. In 1892, out of a total number of 3,151 students in the five universities of Switzerland and in the academies of Fribourg and Neuchâtel, the number of theological students was only 374, positively less than that of the teaching staff, which was 431. Leaving out the academies named, which had no medical faculty, the number of theological students stood at 275 out of 2,917. The Church in Switzerland has thus undergone the relative restriction in power and prestige seen in the other European countries of long-established culture. The evolution, however, remains negative rather than positive. Though a number of pastors latterly call themselves *libres penseurs* or *penseurs libres*, and a movement of ethical culture (*morale sociale*) has made progress, the forces of positive freethought are not numerically strong. An economic basis still supports the Churches, and the lack of it leaves rationalism non-aggressive.<sup>2</sup>

A somewhat similar state of things exists in Holland, where the "higher criticism" of both the Old and New Testaments made notable progress in the middle decades of the century. There then resulted not only an extensive decay of orthodoxy within the Protestant Church, but a movement of aggressive popular freethought, which was for a number of years well represented in journalism. To-day, orthodoxy and freethought are alike less demonstrative; the broad explanation being that the Dutch people in the mass has ceased to be pietistic, and has secularized its life. Even in the Bible-loving Boer Republic of South Africa (Transvaal), in its time one of the most orthodox of the civilized communities of the world, there was seen in the past generation the phenomenon of an agnostic ex-clergyman's election to the post of president, in the person of T. F. Burgers, who succeeded Pretorius in 1871. His election was of course on political and not on religious grounds; and panic fear on the score of his heresy, besides driving some fanatics

<sup>1</sup> Grote, *Seven Letters concerning the Politics of Switzerland*, pp. 34-35. Hagenbach (*Kirchengeschichte*, ii, 427-28) shows no shame over the insurrection at Zürich. But cf. Beard, in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Dr. Strauss*, 1845, pp. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the rapport of Ch. Fulpius in the *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906.

to emigrate, is said to have disorganized a Boer expedition under his command;<sup>1</sup> but his views were known when he was elected. In the years 1899-1902 the terrible experience of the last Boer War, in South Africa as in Britain, perhaps did more to turn critical minds against supernaturalism than was accomplished by almost any other agency in the same period. In Britain the overturn was by way of the revolt of many ethically-minded Christians against the attitude of the orthodox churches, which were so generally and so unscrupulously belligerent as to astonish many even of their freethinking opponents.<sup>2</sup> As regards the Boers and the Cape Dutch the resultant unbelief was among the younger men, who harassed their elders with challenges as to the justice or the activity of a God who permitted the liberties of his most devoted worshippers to be wantonly destroyed. Among the more educated burghers in the Orange Free State commandos unbelief asserted itself with increasing force and frequency.<sup>3</sup> An ethical rationalism thus motivated is not likely to be displaced; and the Christian churches of Britain have thus the sobering knowledge that the war which they so vociferously glorified<sup>4</sup> has wrought to the discredit of their creed alike in their own country and among the vanquished.

16. The history of popular freethought in Sweden yields a good illustration, in a compact form,<sup>5</sup> of the normal play of forces and counter-forces. Since the day of Christina, as we saw, though there have been many evidences of passive unbelief, active rationalism has been little known in her kingdom down till modern times, Sweden as a whole having been little touched by the great ferment of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution, however, stirred the waters there as elsewhere. Tegnér, the poet-bishop, author of the once-famous *Frithiof's Saga*, was notable in his day for a determined rejection of the evangelical doctrine of salvation; and his letters contain much criticism of the ruling system. But the first recognizable champion of freethought in Sweden is the thinker and historian E. G. Geijer (d. 1847), whose history of his native land is one of the best European performances of his generation.

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Theal, *South Africa* ("Story of the Nations" series), pp. 340, 345. Mr. Theal's view of the mental processes of the Boers is somewhat *à priori*, and his explanation seems in part inconsistent with his own narrative.

<sup>2</sup> An English acquaintance of my own at Cape Town, who before the war not only was an orthodox believer, but found his chief weekly pleasure in attending church, was so astounded by the general attitude of the clergy on the war that he severed his connection, once for all. Thousands did the same in England.

<sup>3</sup> I write on the strength of personal testimonies spontaneously given to me in South Africa, some of them by clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church.

<sup>4</sup> See the evidence collected in the pamphlet *The Churches and the War*, by Alfred Marks. New Age Office, 1905.

<sup>5</sup> For the survey here reduced to outline I am indebted to two Swedish friends.



In 1820 he was prosecuted for his attack upon the dogmas of the Trinity and redemption—long the special themes of discussion in Sweden—in his book *Thorild*; but was acquitted by the jury. Thenceforth Sweden follows the general development of Europe. In 1841 Strauss's *Leben Jesu* was translated in Swedish, and wrought its usual effect. On the popular side the poet Wilhelm von Braun carried on an anti-Biblical warfare; and a blacksmith in a provincial town contrived to print in 1850 a translation of Paine's *Age of Reason*. Once more the spirit of persecution blazed forth, and he was prosecuted and imprisoned. H. B. Palmaer (d. 1854) was likewise prosecuted for his satire, *The Last Judgment in Cocaigne* (Kräkwinkel), with the result that his defence extended his influence. In the same period the Stockholm curate Nils Ignell (d. 1864) produced a whole series of critical pamphlets and a naturalistic *History of the Development of Man*, besides supplying a preface to the Swedish translation of Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. Meantime translations of the works of Theodore Parker, by V. Pfeiff and A. F. Akerberg, had a large circulation and a wide influence; and the courage of the gymnasium rector N. J. Cramer (d. 1893), author of *The Farewell to the Church*, gave an edge to the movement. The partly rationalistic doctrine of Victor Rydberg (d. 1895) was in comparison uncritical, and was proportionally popular.

On another line the books of Dr. Nils Lilja (d. 1870), written for working people, created a current of rationalism among the masses; and in the next generation G. J. Leufstedt maintained it by popular lectures and by the issue of translations of Colenso, Ingersoll, Büchner, and Renan. Hjalmar Stromer (d. 1886) did similar platform work. Meantime the followers of Parker and Rydberg founded in 1877 a monthly review, *The Truthseeker*, which lasted till 1894, and an association of "Believers in Reason," closely resembling the British Ethical Societies of our own day. Among its leading adherents has been K. P. Arnoldson, the well-known peace advocate. Liberal clerics were now fairly numerous; Positivism, represented by Dr. Anton Nyström's *General History of Civilization*, played its part; and the more radical freethinking movement, nourished by new translations, became specially active, with the usual effect on orthodox feeling. AUGUST STRINDBERG, author and lecturer, was prosecuted in 1884 on a charge of ridiculing the eucharist, but was declared not guilty. The strenuous VICTOR LENNSTRAND, lecturer and journalist, prosecuted in 1888 and later for his anti-Christian propaganda, was twice fined and imprisoned, with the result of extending his influence and discrediting his opponents.

"Utilitarian Associations," created by his activity, were set up in many parts of the country; and his movement survives his death.

17. Only in the United States has the public lecture platform been made a means of propaganda to anything like the extent seen in Britain; and the greatest part of the work in the States has thus far been done by the late Colonel INGERSOLL, the leading American orator of the last generation, and the most widely influential platform propagandist of the last century. No other single freethinker, it is believed, has reached such an audience by public speech; and between his propaganda and that of the freethought journals there has been maintained for a generation back a large body of vigorous freethinking opinion in all parts of the States. Before the Civil War this could hardly be said. In the middle decades of the century the conditions had been so little changed that after the death of President LINCOLN, who was certainly a non-Christian deist, and an agnostic deist at that,<sup>1</sup> it was sought to be established that he was latterly orthodox. In his presidential campaign of 1860 he escaped attack on his opinions simply because his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, was likewise an unbeliever.<sup>2</sup> The great negro orator, FREDERICK DOUGLAS, was as heterodox as Lincoln.<sup>3</sup> It is even alleged that President Grant<sup>4</sup> was of the same cast of opinion. Such is the general drift of intelligent thought in the United States, from Washington onwards; and still the social conditions impose on public men the burden of concealment, while popular history is garbled for the same reasons. Despite the great propagandist power of the late Colonel Ingersoll, therefore, American freethought remains dependent largely on struggling organizations and journals,<sup>5</sup> and its special literature is rather of the popularizing than of the scholarly order. Nowhere else has every new advance of rationalistic science been more angrily opposed by the priesthood; because nowhere is the ordinary prejudice of the priest more voluble or better-bottomed in self-complacency. As late as 1891 the Methodist Bishop Keener delivered a ridiculous attack on the evolution theory before the Œcumenical Council of Methodism at Washington, declaring that it had been utterly refuted by a certain "wonderful deposit of the Ashley beds."<sup>6</sup> Various professors in ecclesiastical colleges have been driven from their posts for accepting in turn the discoveries of geology, biology, and the "higher criticism"—for

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lamon's *Life of Lincoln*, and J. B. Remsburg's *Abraham Lincoln: Was he a Christian?* (New York, 1893.)

<sup>2</sup> Remsburg, pp. 318-19.

<sup>3</sup> Personal information.

<sup>4</sup> Remsburg, p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Of these the New York *Truthseeker* has been the most energetic and successful.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Warfare*, i, 81.



instance, Woodrow of Columbia, South Carolina; Toy of Louisville; Winchell of Vanderbilt University; and more than one professor in the American college at Beyrout.<sup>1</sup> In every one of the three former cases, it is true, the denounced professor has been called to a better chair; and latterly some of the more liberal clergy have even commercially exploited the higher criticism by producing the "Rainbow Bible." Generally speaking, however, in the United States sheer preoccupation with business, and lack of leisure, counteract in a measure the relative advantage of social freedom; and while culture is more widely diffused than in England, it remains on the whole less radical in the "educated" classes so-called. So far as it is possible to make a quantitative estimate, it may be said that in the more densely populated parts of the States there is latterly less of studious freethinking because there is less leisure than in England; but that in the Western States there is a relative superiority, class for class, because of the special freedom of the conditions and the independent character of many of the immigrants who constitute the new populations.<sup>2</sup>

#### SECTION 2.—BIBLICAL CRITICISM

It is within the last generation that the critical analysis of the Jewish and Christian sacred books has been most generally carried on; but the process has never been suspended since the German *Aufklärung* arose on the stimuli of English and French deism.

1. At the beginning of the century, educated men in general believed in the Semitic myths of creation, as given in Genesis: long before the end of it they had more or less explicitly rectified their beliefs in the light of new natural science and new archæology. The change became rapid after 1860; but it had been led up to even in the period of reaction. While in France, under the restored monarchy, rationalistic activity was mainly headed into historical, philosophical, and sociological study, and in England orthodoxy predominated in theological discussion, the German rationalistic movement went on among the specialists, despite the liberal religious reaction of Schleiermacher,<sup>3</sup> who himself gave forth such

<sup>1</sup> White, *Warfare*, i, 84, 86, 314, 317, 318.

<sup>2</sup> This view is not inconsistent with the fact that popular forms of credulity are also found specially flourishing in the West. Cp. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 3rd ed. ii, 832-33.

<sup>3</sup> As to the absolute predominance of rationalistic unbelief (in the orthodox sense of the word) in educated Germany in the first third of the century, see the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. ii, 240-45, 255, 266-75. Despite the various reactions claimed by Perthes and others, it is clear that the tables have never since been turned. Cp. Pearson, *Infidelity*, pp. 554-59, 569-74. Schleiermacher was charged on his own side with making fatal concessions. Kahn, *Internal Hist. of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856 pp. 210-11; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, i, 181; and Quinet as there cited.

an uncertain sound. His case and that of his father, an army chaplain, tell signally of the power of the mere clerical occupation to develop a species of emotional belief in one who has even attained rationalism. When the son, trained for the church, avowed to his father (1787) that he had lost faith in the supernatural Jesus, the father professed to mourn bitterly, but three years later avowed that he in his own youth had preached Christianity for twelve years while similarly disbelieving its fundamental tenet.<sup>1</sup> He professionally counselled compromise, which the son duly practised, with such success that, whereas he originally addressed his *Discourses on Religion* (1799) to "the educated among its despisers," he was able to say in the preface to the third edition, twenty years later (1821), that the need now was to reason with the pietists and literalists, the ignorant and bigoted, the credulous and superstitious.<sup>2</sup> In short, he and others had been able to set up a fashion of poetic religion among deists, but not to lighten the darkness of orthodox belief.

The ostensible religious revival associated with Schleiermacher's name was in fact a reaction of temperament, akin to the romantic movement in literature, of which Chateaubriand in France was the exponent as regarded religious feeling. The German "rationalism" of the latter part of the eighteenth century, with its stolid translation of the miraculous into the historical, and its official accommodation of the result to the purposes of the pulpit, had not reached any firm scientific foundation; and Schleiermacher on the other side, protesting that religion was a matter not of knowledge but of feeling, attracted alike the religious emotionalists, the seekers of compromise, and the romantics. His personal and literary charm, and his tolerance of mundane morals, gave him a German vogue not unlike that of Chateaubriand in France. His intellectual cast and ultimate philosophic bias, however, together with his freedom of private life,<sup>3</sup> ultimately alienated him from the orthodox, and thus it was that he died (1834) in the odour of heresy. Heresy, in fact, he had preached from the outset; and it was only in a highly emancipated society that his teaching could have been fashionable. The statement that by his *Discourses* "with one stroke he overthrew the card-castle of rationalism and the old fortress of orthodoxy"<sup>4</sup> is literally quite

<sup>1</sup> *Aus Schleiermachers Leben: In Briefen*, 1860, i, 42, 84. The father's letters, with their unctuous rhetoric, are a revelation of the power of declamatory habit to eliminate sincere thought.

<sup>2</sup> *Werke*, 1843, i, 140.

<sup>3</sup> See Kahn, p. 214, and refs. as to his relations with Frau Grunow. "He belonged to the circle of Prince Louis, in which intellect and art, but not morality," reigned. *Ib.* Compare the sympathetic Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.* Eng. tr. 1899, pp. 103-104. It was of course his clerical character that disadvantaged Schleiermacher in such matters.

<sup>4</sup> Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 87.



false, for the old compromising pseudo-rationalism survived a long while, and orthodoxy still longer; and it is quite misleading inasmuch as it suggests a resurgence of faith. The same historian proceeds to record that some saw in the work "only a slightly disguised return to superstition, and others a brilliant confession of unbelief." "The general public saw in the Discourses a new assault of romanticism upon religion. The clergy in particular were painfully aroused, and did not dissemble their irritation. Spalding himself could not restrain his anger." Schleiermacher's friend Sach, who had passed the Discourses in manuscript, woke up to denounce them as unchristian, pantheistic, and denuded of the ideas of God, immortality, and morality.<sup>1</sup>

In England the work would have been so denounced on all sides; and the bulk of Schleiermacher's teaching would there have been reckoned revolutionary and "godless." He was a lover of both political and social freedom; and in his *Two Memoranda on the Church Question in regard to Prussia* (1803) he made "a veritable declaration of war on the clerical spirit."<sup>2</sup> Recognizing that ecclesiastical discipline had reached a low ebb, he even proposed that civil marriage should precede religious marriage, and be alone obligatory; besides planning a drastic subjection of the Prussian Church to State regulation.<sup>3</sup> In his pamphlet on *The So-called Epistle to Timothy*, of which he denied the authenticity, he played the part of a "destructive" critic.<sup>4</sup> He "saw with pain the approach of the rising tide of confessionism"—that is, the movement for an exact statement of creed.<sup>5</sup> Nor can it be said that, despite his attempts in later life to reach a more definite theology, Schleiermacher really held firmly any Christian or even theistic dogma. He seems to have been at bottom a pantheist;<sup>6</sup> and the secret of his attraction for so many German preachers and theologians then and since is that he offered them in eloquent and moving diction a kind of profession of faith which avoided alike the fatal undertaking of the old religious rationalism to reduce the sacred narratives to terms of reason, and the dogged refusal of orthodoxy to admit that there was anything to explain away. Philosophically and critically speaking, his teaching has no lasting intellectual substance, being first a negation of intellectual tests and then a belated attempt to apply them. It is not even original, being a development from Rousseau and Lessing. But it had undoubtedly a freeing and civilizing influence for many years;

<sup>1</sup> Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 123-24. <sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 119. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Strauss, *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, 1865, p. 18.

and it did little harm save insofar as it fostered the German proclivity to the nebulous in thought and language, and partly encouraged the normal resistance to the critical spirit. All irrationalism, to be sure, in some sort spells self-will and lawlessness; but the orthodox negation of reason was far more primitive than Schleiermacher's. From that side, accordingly, he never had any sympathy. When, soon after his funeral, in which his coffin was borne and followed by troops of students, his church was closed to the friends who wished there to commemorate him, it was fairly clear that his own popularity lay mainly with the progressive spirits, and not among the orthodox; and in the end his influence tended to merge in that of the critical movement.<sup>1</sup>

2. Gradually that had developed a greater precision of method, though there were to be witnessed repetitions of the intellectual anomalies of the past, so-called rationalists losing the way while supernaturalists occasionally found it. It has been remarked by Reuss that Paulus, a clerical "rationalist," fought for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the very year in which Tholuck, a reconverted evangelical, gave up the Pauline authorship as hopeless; that when Schleiermacher, ostensibly a believer in inspiration, denied the authenticity of the Epistle to Timothy, the [theological] rationalist Wegscheider opposed him; and that the rationalistic Eichhorn maintained the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch long after the supernaturalist Vater had disproved it.<sup>2</sup> Still the general movement was inevitably and irrevocably rationalistic. Beginning with the Old Testament, criticism gradually saw more and more of mere myth where of old men had seen miracle, and where the first rationalists saw natural events misconceived. Soon the process reached the New Testament, every successive step being resisted in the old fashion; and much laborious work, now mostly forgotten, was done by a whole company of scholars, among whom Paulus, Eichhorn, De Wette, G. L. Bauer, Wegscheider, Bretschneider, and Gabler were prominent.<sup>3</sup> The train as it were exploded on the world in the great *Life of Jesus* by STRAUSS (1835), a year after the death of Schleiermacher.

This was in some respects the high-water mark of rational critical science for the century, inasmuch as it represented the

<sup>1</sup> For estimates of his work cp. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 45; Kahnis, as last cited; Pfeiderer, *Development of Theology in Germany*, 1893, bk. i, ch. iii; bk. ii, ch. ii; Lichtenberger, as cited; and art. by Rev. F. J. Smith in *Theol. Review*, July, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Reuss, *History of the Canon*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 387. Cp. Strauss, *Einleitung in Das Leben Jesu*, § 10.

<sup>3</sup> See a good account of the development in Strauss's Introductions to his two *Lives of Jesus*.



fullest use of free judgment. The powerful and orderly mind of Strauss, working systematically on a large body of previous unsystematic criticism, produced something more massive and coherent than any previous writer had achieved. It was not that he applied any new principle. Criticism had long been slowly disengaging itself from the primary fallacy of taking all scriptural records as standing for facts, and explaining away the supernatural side. Step by step it was recognized that not misinterpretation of events but *mythology* underlay much of the sacred history. Already in 1799 an anonymous and almost unnoticed writer<sup>1</sup> had argued that the entire gospel story was a pre-existent conception in the Jewish mind. In 1802 G. L. Bauer had produced a treatise on *Hebrew Mythology*,<sup>2</sup> in which not only was the actuality of myth in Bible narrative insisted on, but the general principle of animism in savage thought was clearly formulated. Semler had seen that the stories of Samson and Esther were myths. Even Eichhorn—who reduced all the Old Testament stories to natural events misunderstood, accepted Noah and the patriarchs as historical personages, and followed Bahrdt in making Moses light a fire on Mount Sinai—changed his method on coming to the New Testament, and pointed out that only indemonstrable hypotheses could be reached by turning supernatural events into natural where there was no outside historical evidence. Other writers—as Krug, Gabler, Kaiser, Wegscheider, and Horst—ably pressed the mythical principle, some of them preceding Bauer. The so-called “natural” theory—which was not at all that of the “naturalists” but the specialty of the compromising “rationalists”—was thus effectively shaken by a whole series of critics.

But the power of intellectual habit and environment was still strikingly illustrated in the inability of all of the critics to shake off completely the old fallacy. Bauer explained the divine promise to Abraham as standing for the patriarch's own prophetic anticipation, set up by a contemplation of the starry heavens. Another gave up the supernatural promise of the birth of the Baptist, but held to the dumbness of Zechariah. Krug similarly accepted the item of the childless marriage, and claimed to be applying the mythical principle in taking the Magi without the star, and calling them oriental merchants. Kaiser took the story of the fish with a coin in its mouth as fact, while complaining of other less absurd reductions of miracle to natural occurrences. The method of Paulus,<sup>3</sup> the “Chris-

<sup>1</sup> In a volume entitled *Offenbarung und Mythologie*.

<sup>2</sup> *Hebräische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments*.

<sup>3</sup> *Evangeliencommentar*, 1800-1801; *Leben Jesu*, 1828.

tian Evêmeros”—who loyally rejected all miracles, but got rid of them on the plan of explaining, *e.g.*, that when Jesus was supposed to be walking on the water he was really walking on the bank—was still popular, a generation after Schleiermacher's *Reden*. The mythical theory as a whole went on hesitating among definitions and genera—saga and legend, historical myth, mythical history, philosophical myth, poetic myth—and the differences of the mythological school over method arrested the acceptance of their fundamental principle.

3. No less remarkable was the check to the few attempts which had been made at clearing the ground by removing the Fourth Gospel from the historical field. Lessing had taken this gospel as peculiarly historical, as did Fichte and Schleiermacher and the main body of critics after him. Only in England (by Evanson) had the case been more radically handled. In 1820 Bretschneider, following up a few tentative German utterances, put forth, by way of hypothesis, a general argument<sup>1</sup> to the effect that the whole presentment of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is irreconcilable with that of the Synoptics, that it could not be taken as historical, and that it could not therefore be the work of the Apostle John.<sup>2</sup> The result was a general discussion and a general rejection. The innovation in theory was too sudden for assimilation: and Bretschneider, finding no support, later declared that he had been “relieved of his doubts” by the discussion, and had thus attained his object. Strauss himself, in his first *Leben Jesu*, failed to realize the case; and it was not till the second (1863) that he developed it, profiting by the intermediate work of F. C. Baur.

4. But as regards the gospel history in general, the first *Leben Jesu* is a great “advance in force” as compared with all preceding work. Himself holding undoubtingly to the vital assumption of the rationalizing school that the central story of Jesus and the disciples and the crucifixion was history, he yet applied the mythical principle systematically to nearly all the episodes, handling the case with the calmness of a great judge and the skill of a great critic. Even Strauss, indeed, paid the penalty which seems so generally to attach to the academic discipline—the lack of ultimate hold on life. After showing that much of the gospel narrative was mere myth, and leaving utterly problematical all the rest, he saw fit to begin and end with the announcement that nothing really mattered—that the *ideal*

<sup>1</sup> *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine*.

<sup>2</sup> It is thus inaccurate—Strauss himself being the witness—to say, as does Dr. Conybeare (*Hist. of N. T. Crit.* p. 107), that Strauss was the first German writer to discern the unhistoricity of the Fourth Gospel.



Jesus was unaffected by historic analysis, and that it was the ideal that counted.<sup>1</sup> In a world in which nine honest believers out of ten held that the facts mattered everything, there could be no speedy or practical triumph for a demonstration which thus announced its own inutility. Strauss had achieved for New Testament criticism what Kant and Fichte and Hegel had compassed for rational philosophy in general, ostensibly proffering together bane and antidote. As in their case, however, so in his, the truly critical work had an effect in despite of the theoretic surrender. Among instructed men, historical belief in the gospels has never been the same since Strauss wrote; and he lived to figure for his countrymen as one of the most thoroughgoing freethinkers of his age.

5. For a time there was undoubtedly "reaction," engineered with the full power of the Prussian State in particular. The pious Frederick William IV, already furious against Swiss Radicalism in 1847, was moved by the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848 to a fierce repression of everything liberal in theological teaching. "This dismal period of Prussian history was the bloom-period of the Hengsterbergan theology"<sup>2</sup>—the school of rabid orthodoxy. In 1854, Eduard Zeller, bringing out in book form his work on the *Acts of the Apostles* (originally produced in the *Tübingen Theological Journal*, 1848-51), writes that "The exertions of our ecclesiastics, assisted by political reaction, have been so effectual that the majority of our theologians not only look with suspicion or indifference on this or that scientific opinion, but regard scientific knowledge in general with the same feelings"; and he leaves it an open question "whether time will bring a change, or whether German Protestantism will stagnate in the Byzantine conditions towards which it is now hastening with all sail on."<sup>3</sup> For his own part, Zeller abandoned the field of theology for that of philosophy, producing a history of Greek philosophy, and one of German philosophy since Leibnitz.

6. Another expert of Baur's school, Albrecht Schweigler, author of works on Montanism, the Post-Apostolic Age, and other problems of early Christian history, and of a *Handbook of the History of Philosophy* which for half a century had an immense circulation, was similarly driven out of theological research by the virulence of the reaction,<sup>4</sup> and turned to the task of Roman history, in which he distinguished himself as he did in every other he essayed. The

<sup>1</sup> *Das Leben Jesu*, pref. to first ed. end.

<sup>2</sup> Hausrath, *David Friedrich Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit*, 1878, ii, 233-34.

<sup>3</sup> Pref. to work cited, Eng. tr. 1875, i, 86, 89.

<sup>4</sup> Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 391.

brains were being expelled from the chairs of theology. But this very fact tended to discredit the reaction itself; and outside of the Prussian sphere of influence German criticism went actively on. Gustav Volkmar, turning his back on Germany in 1854, settled in Switzerland, and in 1863 became professor at Zürich, where he added to his early *Religion Jesu* (1857) and other powerful works his treatises on the *Origin of the Gospels* (1866), *The Gospels* (1869), *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (1860-65), and *Jesus Nazarenus* (1881)—all stringent critical performances, irreconcilable with orthodoxy. Elsewhere too there was a general resumption of progress.

To this a certain contribution was made by BRUNO BAUER (1809-1882), who, after setting out as an orthodox Hegelian, outwent Strauss in the opposite direction. In 1838, as a licentiate at Bonn, he produced two volumes on *The Religion of the Old Testament*, in which the only critical element is the notion of a "historical evolution of revelation." Soon he had got beyond belief in revelation. In 1840 appeared his *Critique of the Gospel History of John*, and in 1841 his much more disturbing *Critique of the Gospel History of the Synoptics*, wherein there is substituted for Strauss's formula of the "community-mind" working on tradition, that of individual literary construction. Weisse and Wilcke had convinced him that Mark was the first gospel, and Wilcke in particular that it was no mere copy of an oral tradition but an artistic construction. As he claimed, this was a much more "positive" conception than Strauss's, which was fundamentally "mysterious."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, though he saw that the new position involved the non-historicity of the Gospel Jesus, he left his own historic conception "mysterious," giving no reason why the "Urevangelist" framed his romance. Bauer was non-anthropological, and left his theory as it began, one of an arbitrary construction by gospel-makers. Immediately after his book appeared that of Ghillany on *Human Sacrifice among the ancient Hebrews* (1842), which might have given him clues; but they seem to have had for him no significance.

As it was, his book on the Synoptics raised a great storm; and when the official request for the views of the university faculties as to the continuance of his licence evoked varying answers, Bauer settled the matter by a violent attack on professional theologians in general, and was duly expelled.<sup>2</sup> For the rest of his long life he was a freelance, doing some relatively valid work on the Pauline problem, but pouring out his turbid spirit in a variety of political

<sup>1</sup> *Kritik der evang. Gesch. der Synoptiker*, ed. 1846, Vorrede, pp. v-xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.* pp. 388-89.



writings, figuring by turns as an anti-Semite (1843), a culture-historian,<sup>1</sup> and a pre-Bismarckian imperialist, despairing of German unity, but looking hopefully to German absorption in a vast empire of Russia.<sup>2</sup> Naturally he found political happiness in 1870,<sup>3</sup> living on, a spent force, to do fresh books on Christian origins,<sup>4</sup> on German culture-history, and on the glories of imperialism.

7. In 1864, after an abstention of twenty years from discussion of the problem, Strauss restated his case in a *Life of Jesus, adapted for the German People*. Here, accepting the contention of F. C. Baur that the proper line of inquiry was to settle the order of composition of the synoptic gospels, and agreeing in Baur's view that Matthew came first, he undertook to offer more of positive result than was reached in his earlier research, which simply dealt scientifically with the abundant elements of dubiety in the records. The new procedure was really much less valid than the old. Baur had quite unwarrantably decided that the Sermon on the Mount was one of the most certainly genuine of the discourses ascribed to Jesus;<sup>5</sup> and Strauss, while exhibiting a reserve of doubt<sup>6</sup> as to all "such speeches," nonetheless committed himself to the "certain" genuineness alike of the Sermon and of the seven parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.<sup>7</sup> Many scholars who continue to hold by the historicity of Jesus have since recognized that the Sermon is no real discourse, but a compilation of gnomic sayings or maxims previously current in Jewish literature.<sup>8</sup> Thus the certainties of Baur and Strauss pass into the category of the cruder certainties which Strauss impugned; and the latter left the life of Jesus an unsolved enigma after all his analysis.

As he himself noted, the German New Testament criticism of the previous twenty years had "run to seed"<sup>9</sup> in a multitude of treatises on the sources, aims, composition, and mutual relations of the Synoptics, as if these were the final issues. They had settled nothing; and after a lapse of fifty years the same problems are being endlessly discussed. The scientific course for Strauss would have been to develop more radically the method of his first *Life*: failing to do this, he made no new contribution to the problem, though he deftly enough indicated how little difference there was, save in formula, between Baur's negations and his own.

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. der Politik, Kultur, und Aufklärung des 18ten Jahrh.* 4 Bde. 1843-45; *Gesch. der französ. Revolution*, 3 Bde. 1847.

<sup>2</sup> *Russland und das Germanenthum*, 1847.

<sup>3</sup> Lichtenberger, p. 378.

<sup>4</sup> *Philo, Strauss, Renan, und das Urchristenthum*, 1874; *Christus und die Cäsaren*, 1877.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Christenthum und die chr. Kirche*, 1854, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*, § 41, 3te Aufl. p. 254, 1st par.

<sup>7</sup> *Id. ib.*

<sup>8</sup> *Cp. Christianity and Mythology*, pt. iii, div. ii, § 6.

<sup>9</sup> Pref. to second *Leben Jesu*, ed. cited, p. xv.

Something of the explanation is to be detected in the sub-title, "Adapted for the German People." From his first entrance into the arena he had met with endless *odium theologicum*; being at once deprived of his post as a philosophical lecturer at Tübingen, and virulently denounced on all hands. His proposed appointment to a chair at Zürich in 1839, as we have seen, led there to something approaching a revolution. Later, he found that acquaintance with him was made a ground of damage to his friends; and though he had actually been elected to the Württemberg Diet in 1848 by his fellow citizens of Ludwigsburg town, after being defeated in his candidature for the new parliament at Frankfort through the hostility of the rural voters, he had abundant cause to regard himself as a banned person in Germany. A craving for the goodwill of the people as against the hatred of the priests was thus very naturally and justifiably operative in the conception of his second work; and this none the less because his fundamental political conservatism had soon cut short his representation of radical Ludwigsburg. As he justly said, the question of the true history of Christianity was not one for theologians alone. But the emotional aim affected the intellectual process. As previously in his *Life of Ulrich von Hutten*, he strove to establish the proposition that the new Reformation he desired was akin to the old; and that the Germans, as the "people of the Reformation," would show themselves true to their past by casting out the religion of dogma and supernaturalism. Such an attempt to identify the spirit of freethought with the old spirit of Bibliolatry was in itself fantastic, and could not create a genuine movement, though the book had a wide audience. The *Glaubenslehre*, in which he made good his maxim that "the true criticism of dogma is its history," is a sounder performance. Strauss's avowed desire to write a book as suitable to Germans as was Renan's *Vie de Jésus* to Frenchmen was something less than scientific. The right book would be written for all nations.

Like most other Germans, Strauss exulted immensely over the war of 1870. In what is now recognized as the national manner, he wrote two boastful open-letters to Renan explaining that whatsoever Germany did was right, and whatsoever France did was wrong, and that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine was altogether just. These letters form an important contribution to the vast cairn of self-praise raised by latter-day German culture. But Strauss's literary life ended on a nobler note and in a higher warfare. After all his efforts at popularity, and all his fraternization with his people on the ground of racial animosity (not visible in his volume



of lectures on *Voltaire*, written and delivered at the request of the Princess Alice), his fundamental sincerity moved him to produce a final "Confession," under the title of *The Old and the New Faith* (1872). It asked the questions: "Are we still Christians?"; "Have we still religion?"; "How do we conceive the world?"; "How do we order our life?"; and it answered them all in a calmly and uncompromisingly naturalistic sense, dismissing all that men commonly call religious belief. The book as a whole is heterogeneous in respect of its two final chapters, "Of our Great Poets" and "Of our Great Musicians," which seem to have been appended by way of keeping up the attitude of national fraternity evoked by the war. But they could not and did not avail to conciliate the theologians, who opened fire on the book with all their old animosity, and with an unconcealed delight in the definite committal of the great negative critic to an attitude of practical atheism. The book ran through six editions in as many months, and crystallized much of the indefinite freethinking of Germany into something clearer and firmer. All the more was it a new engine of strife and disintegration; and the aging author, shocked but steadied by the unexpected outburst of hostility, penned a quatrain to himself, ending: "In storm hast thou begun; in storm shalt thou end."

On the last day of the year he wrote an "afterword" summing up his work and his position. He had not written, he declared, by way of contending with opponents; he had sought rather to commune with those of his own way of thinking; and to them, he felt, he had the right to appeal to live up to their convictions, not compromising with other opinions, and not adhering to any Church. For his "Confession" he anticipated the thanks of a more enlightened future generation. "The time of agreement," he concluded, "will come, as it came for the *Leben Jesu*; only this time I shall not live to see it."<sup>1</sup> A little more than a year later (1874) he passed away.

It is noteworthy that he should have held that agreement *had* come as to the first *Leben Jesu*. He was in fact convinced that all educated men—at least in Germany—had ceased to believe in miracles and the supernatural, however they might affect to conform to orthodoxy. And, broadly speaking, this was true: all New Testament criticism of any standing had come round to the naturalistic point of view. But, as we have seen, the second *Leben Jesu* was far enough from reaching a solid historical footing;

<sup>1</sup> Zeller, *David Friedrich Strauss*, 2te Aufl. p. 113.

and the generation which followed made only a piecemeal and unsystematic advance to a scientific solution.

8. And it was long before even Strauss's early method of scientific criticism was applied to the initial problems of Old Testament history. The investigation lagged strangely. Starting from the clues given by Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon, and above all by the suggestion of Astruc (1753) as to the twofold element implied in the God-names Jehovah and Elohim, it had proceeded, for sheer lack of radical skepticism, on the assumption that the Pentateuchal history was true. On this basis, modern Old Testament criticism of a professional kind may be said to have been founded by Eichhorn, who hoped by a quasi-rationalistic method to bring back unbelievers to belief.<sup>1</sup> Of his successors, some, like Ilgen, were ahead of their time; some, like De Wette, failed to make progress in their criticism; some, like Ewald, remained always arbitrary; and some of the ablest and most original, as Vatke, failed to coördinate fully their critical methods and results.<sup>2</sup> Thus, despite all the German activity, little sure progress had been made, apart from discrimination of sources, between the issue of the *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures* of the Scotch Catholic priest, Dr. GEDDES, in 1800, and the publication of the first part of the work of Bishop COLENSO on *The Pentateuch* (1862). This, by the admission of KUENEN, who had begun as a rather narrow believer,<sup>3</sup> corrected the initial error of the German specialists by applying to the narrative the common-sense tests suggested long before by Voltaire.<sup>4</sup> That academic scholarship thus wasted two generations in its determination to adhere to the "reverent" method, and in its aversion to the "irreverence" which proceeded on the simple power to see facts, is a sufficient comment on the Kantian doctrine that it was the business of scholars to adapt the sacred books to popular needs. Tampering with the judgment of their flocks, the German theologians injured their own.

As of old, part of the explanation lay in the malignant resistance of orthodoxy to every new advance. We have seen how Strauss's appointment to a chair at Zürich was met by Swiss pietism. The same spirit sought to revert, even in "intellectually free" Germany, to its old methods of repression. The authorities of Berlin discussed

<sup>1</sup> Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 16. Eichhorn seems to have known Astruc's work only at second-hand, yet, without him, it might be contended, Astruc's work would have been completely lost to science. (*Id.* p. 23.)

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Cheyne's surveys, which are those of a liberal ecclesiastic—a point of view on which he has since notably advanced.

<sup>3</sup> Cheyne, pp. 187-88.

<sup>4</sup> Kuenen, *The Hexateuch*, Eng. tr. introd. pp. xiv-xvii.



with Neander the propriety of suppressing Strauss's *Leben Jesu*;<sup>1</sup> and after a time those who shared his views were excluded even from philosophical chairs.<sup>2</sup> Later, the brochure in which Edgar Bauer defended his brother Bruno against his opponents (1842) was seized by the police; and in the following year, for publishing *The Strife of Criticism with Church and State*, the same writer was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. In private life, persecution was carried on in the usual ways; and the virulence of the theological resistance recalled the palmy days of Lutheran polemics. In the sense that the mass of orthodoxy held its ground for the time being, the attack failed. Naturally the most advanced and uncompromisingly scientific positions were least discussed, the stress of dispute going on around the criticism which modified without annihilating the main elements in the current creed, or that which did the work of annihilation on a popular level of thought. Only in our day is German "expert" criticism beginning openly to reckon with propositions fairly and fully made out by German writers of three or more generations back. Thus in 1781 Corodi in his *Geschichte des Chiliasmus* dwelt on the pre-Hebraic origins of the belief in angels, in immortality, and heaven and hell, and on the Persian derivation of the Jewish seven archangels; Wegscheider in 1819 in his *Institutes of Theology* indicated further connections of the same order, and cited pagan parallels to the virgin-birth; J. A. L. Richter in the same year pointed to Indian and Persian precedents for the Logos and many other Christian doctrines; and several other writers, Strauss included, pointed to both Persian and Babylonian influences on Jewish theology and myth.<sup>3</sup> The mythologist and Hebraist F. Korn (who wrote as "F. Nork"), in a series of learned and vigorous but rather loosely speculative works,<sup>4</sup> indicated many of the mythological elements in Christianity, and endorsed many of the astronomical arguments of Dupuis, while holding to the historicity of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

When even these theses were in the main ignored, more mordant doctrine was necessarily burked. Such subversive criticism of religious history as Ghillany's *Die Menschenopfer der alten Hebräer* (1842), insisting that human sacrifice had been habitual in early Jewry, and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Beard, in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller, *D. F. Strauss*, Eng. tr. 1879, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> See Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, 1903, pp. 1-2, note.

<sup>4</sup> *Mythen der alten Perser als Quellen christlicher Glaubenslehren*, 1835; *Der Mystagog, oder Deutung der Geheimlehren, Symbole und Feste der christlichen Kirche*, 1838; *Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen zu neutestamentlichen Schriftstellen*, 1839; *Biblische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments*, 1842; *Der Festkalender*, 1847, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Der Mystagog*, 1838, p. vii, note, and p. 241.

that ritual cannibalism underlay the paschal eucharist, found even fewer students prepared to appreciate it than did the searching ethico-philosophical criticism passed on the Christian creed by Feuerbach. F. Daumer,<sup>1</sup> who in 1842 published a treatise on the same lines as Ghillany's (*Der Feuer und Molochdienst*), and followed it up in 1847 with another on the Christian mysteries, nearly as drastic, wavered later in his rationalism and avowed his conversion to a species of faith. Hence a certain setback for his school. In France the genial German revolutionist and exile Ewerbeck published, under the titles of *Qu'est ce que la Religion?* and *Qu'est ce que la Bible?* (1850), two volumes of very freely edited translations from Feuerbach, Daumer, Ghillany, Lützelberger (on the simple humanity of Jesus), and Bruno Bauer, avowing that after vainly seeking a publisher for years he had produced the books at his own expense. He had, however, so mutilated the originals as to make the work ineffectual for scholars, without making it attractive to the general public; and there is nothing to show that his formidable-looking arsenal of explosives had much effect on contemporary French thought, which developed on other lines.

Old Testament criticism, nevertheless, has in the last generation been much developed, after having long missed some of the first lines of advance. After Colenso's rectification of the fundamental error as to the historicity of the narrative of the Pentateuch, so long and so obstinately persisted in by the German specialists in contempt of Voltaire, the "higher criticism" proceeded with such substantial certainty on the scientific lines of KUENEN and WELLHAUSEN that, whereas Professor Robertson Smith had to leave the Free Church of Scotland in 1881<sup>2</sup> for propagating Kuenen's views, before the century was out Canons of the English Church were doing the work with the acquiescence of perhaps six clergymen out of ten; and American preachers were found promoting an edition of the Bible which exhibited some of the critical results to the general reader. Heresy on this score had "become merchandise." Nevertheless, the professional tendency to compromise (a result of economic and other pressures) keeps most of the ecclesiastical critics far short of the outspoken utterances of M. M. KALISCH, who in his *Commentary on Leviticus* (1867-72) repudiates every vestige of the doctrine of inspiration.<sup>3</sup> Later clerical critics, notably Canon Driver, use

<sup>1</sup> See Nork's preamble on *Hr. Fr. Daumer, ein kurzweiliger Molochsfänger*, in his *Biblische Mythologie*, Bd. i.

<sup>2</sup> After being acquitted in 1880. The first charge was founded on his *Britannica* article "Bible"; the second on the article "Hebrew Language and Literature," which appeared after the acquittal.

<sup>3</sup> These utterances were noted for their "vigour and independence" by Kuenen, and also



language on that subject which cannot be read with critical respect.<sup>1</sup> But among students at the end of the century the orthodox view was practically extinct. Whereas the defenders of the faith even a generation before habitually stood to the "argument from prophecy," the conception of prophecy as prediction has now become meaningless as regards the so-called Mosaic books; and the constant disclosure of interpolations and adaptations in the others has discredited it as regards the "prophets" themselves. For the rest, much of the secular history still accepted is tentatively reduced to myth in the *Geschichte Israels* of Hugo Winckler (1895-1900). The peculiar theory of Dr. Cheyne is no less "destructive."

9. In New Testament criticism, though the strict critical method of Strauss's first book was not faithfully followed, critical research went on continuously; and the school of F. C. Baur of Tübingen in particular imposed a measure of rational criticism on theologians in general. Apart from Strauss, Baur was probably the ablest Christian scholar of his day. Always lamed by his professionalism, he yet toiled endlessly to bring scientific method into Christian research. His *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, 1845; *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien*, 1847; and *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*, 1853, were epoch-marking works, which recast so radically, in the name of orthodoxy, the historical conception of Christian origins, that he figured as the most unsettling critic of his time after Strauss. With his earlier researches in the history of the first Christian sects and his history of the Church, they constitute a memorable mass of studious and original work. In the case of the Tübingen school as of every other there was "reaction," with the usual pretence by professional orthodoxy that the innovating criticism had been disposed of; but no real refutation has ever taken place. Where Baur reduced the genuine Pauline epistles to four, the last years of the century witnessed the advent of VAN MANEN, who, following up earlier suggestions, wrought out the thesis that the epistles are all alike supposititious. This may or may not hold good; but there has been no restoration of traditionary faith among the mass of open-minded inquirers. Such work as Zeller's *Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles* (1854), produced in Baur's circle, has substantially

by Dr. Cheyne, who remarks that the earlier work of Kalisch on *Exodus* (1855) was somewhat behind the critical standpoint of contemporary investigators on the Continent. (*Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 207.)

<sup>1</sup> See his *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament*, pref. "It is the spirit of compromise that I chiefly dread for our younger students," wrote Dr. Cheyne in 1893 (*Founders*, p. 247). His courteous criticism of Dr. Driver does not fail to point the moral in that writer's direction.

held its ground; and such a comparatively "safe" book of the next generation as Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age* (Eng. tr. of 2nd ed. 1893) leaves no doubt as to the untrustworthiness of the *Acts*. Thus at the close of the century the current professional treatises indicated a "Christianity" stripped not only of all supernaturalism, and therefore of the main religious content of the historic creed, but even of credibility as regards large parts of the non-supernaturalist narratives of its sacred books. The minute analysis and collocation of texts which has occupied so much of critical industry has but made clearer the extreme precariousness of every item in the records. The amount of credit for historicity that continues to be given to them is demonstrably unjustifiable on scientific grounds; and the stand for a "Christianity without dogma" is more and more clearly seen to be an economic adjustment, not an outcome of faithful criticism.

10. The movement of Biblical and other criticism in Germany has had a significant effect on the supply of students for the theological profession. The numbers of Protestant and Catholic theological students in all Germany have varied as follows:—*Protestant*: 1831, 4,147; 1851, 1,631; 1860, 2,520; 1876, 1,539; 1882-83, 3,168. *Catholic*: 1831, 1,801; 1840, 866; 1850, 1,393; 1860, 1,209; 1880, 619.<sup>1</sup> Thus, under the reign of reaction which set in after 1848 there was a prolonged recovery; and again since 1876 the figures rise for Protestantism through financial stimulus. When, however, we take population into account, the main movement is clear. In an increasing proportion, the theological students come from the rural districts (69.4 in 1861-70), the towns furnishing ever fewer;<sup>2</sup> so that the conservative measures do but outwardly and formally affect the course of thought; the clergy themselves showing less and less inclination to make clergymen of their sons.<sup>3</sup> Even among the Catholic population, though that has increased from ten millions in 1830 to sixteen millions in 1880, the number of theological students has fallen from eleven to four per 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>4</sup> Thus, after many "reactions" and much Bismarckism, the *Zeit-Geist* in Germany was still pronouncedly skeptical in all classes in 1881,<sup>5</sup> when the church accommodation in Berlin provided only two per cent. of the population, and even that provision outwent the demand.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Conrad, *The German Universities for the Last Fifty Years*, Eng. tr. 1885, p. 74. See p. 100 as to the financial measures taken; and p. 105 as to the essentially financial nature of the "reaction."

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 103. <sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 104. <sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 112. See pp. 118-19 as to Austria. <sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 97-98. <sup>6</sup> White, *Warfare*, i, 239. In February, 1914, on a given Sunday, out of a Protestant population of over two millions, only 35,000 persons attended church in Berlin. Art. on Creeds, Heresy-Hunting, and Secession in German Protestantism To-day," in *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1914, p. 722.



And though there have been yet other alleged reactions since, and the imperial influence is zealously used for orthodoxy, a large proportion of the intelligent workers in the towns remain socialistic and freethinking; and the mass of the educated classes remain unorthodox in the teeth of the socialist menace. Reactionary professors can make an academic fashion: the majority of instructed men remain tacitly naturalistic.

Alongside of the inveterate rationalism of modern Germany, however, a no less inveterate bureaucratism preserves a certain official conformity to religion. University freedom does not extend to open and direct criticism of the orthodox creed. On the other hand, the applause won by Virchow in 1877 on his declaration against the doctrine of evolution, and the tactic resorted to by him in putting upon that doctrine the responsibility of Socialist violence, are instances of the normal operation of the lower motives against freedom in scientific teaching.<sup>1</sup> The pressure operates in other spheres in Germany, especially under such a regimen as the present. Men who never go to church save on official occasions, and who have absolutely no belief in the Church's doctrine, nevertheless remain nominally its adherents;<sup>2</sup> and the Press laws make it peculiarly difficult to reach the common people with freethinking literature, save through Socialist channels. Thus the Catholic Church is perhaps nowhere—save in Ireland and the United States—more practically influential than in nominally "Protestant" Germany, where it wields a compact vote of a hundred or more in the Reichstag, and can generally count on well-filled churches as beside the half-empty temples of Protestantism.

Another circumstance partly favourable to reaction is the simple maintenance of all the old theological chairs in the universities. As the field of scientific work widens, and increasing commerce raises the social standard of comfort, men of original intellectual power grow less apt to devote themselves to theological pursuits even under the comparatively free conditions which so long kept German Biblical scholarship far above that of other countries. It can hardly be said that men of the mental calibre of Strauss, Baur, Volkmar, and Wellhausen continue to arise among the specialists in their studies. Harnack, the most prominent German Biblical scholar of

<sup>1</sup> See Haeckel's *Freedom in Science and Teaching*, Eng. tr. with pref. by Huxley, 1879, pp. xix, xxv, xxvii, 89-90; and Clifford.

<sup>2</sup> Büchner, for straightforwardly renouncing his connection with the State Church a generation ago, was blamed by many who held his philosophic opinions. In our own day, there has arisen a considerable *Austrittsbewegung*, or "Withdrawal Movement"; while creedless clerics strive to remain inside a Church bent on ejecting them. A. D. McLaren, in *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1914, art. cited.

our day, despite his great learning, creates no such impression of originality and insight, and, though latterly forced forward by more independent minds, exhibits often a very uncritical orthodoxy. Thus it is a priori possible enough that the orthodox reactions so often claimed have actually occurred, in the sense that the experts have reverted to a prior type. A scientifically-minded "theologian" in Germany has now little official scope for his faculty save in the analysis of the Hebrew Sacred Books and the New Testament documents as such; and this has been on the whole very well done, short of the point of express impeachment of the historic delusion; but there is a limit to the attraction of such studies for minds of a modern cast. Thus there is always a chance that chairs will be filled by men of another type.

11. On a less extensive scale than in Germany, critical study of the sacred books made some progress in England, France, and America in the first half of the century; though for a time the attention even of the educated world was centred much more upon the Oxford "tractarian" religious reaction than upon the movement of rationalism. The reaction, associated mainly with the name of John Henry Newman, was rather against the political Erastianism and æsthetic apathy of the Whig type of Christian than against German or other criticism, of which Newman knew little. But against the attitude of those moderate Anglicans who were disposed to disestablish the Church in Ireland and to modernize the liturgy somewhat, the language of the "Tracts for the Times" is as authoritarian and anti-rationalistic as that of Catholics denouncing freethought. Such expressions as "the filth of heretical novelty"<sup>1</sup> are meant to apply to anything in the nature of innovation; the causes at stake are ritual and precedent, the apostolic succession and the status of the priest, not the truth of revelation or the credibility of the scriptures. The third Tract appeals to the clergy to "resist the alteration of even one jot or tittle" of the liturgy; and concerning the burial service the line of argument is: "Do you pretend you can discriminate the wheat from the tares? Of course not." All attempts even to modify the ritual are an "abuse of reason"; and the true believer is adjured to stand fast in the ancient ways.<sup>2</sup> At a pinch he is to "consider what *Reason* says; which surely, as well as Scripture, was given us for *religious* ends";<sup>3</sup> but the only "reason" thus recognized is one which accepts the whole apparatus of revelation. Previous to and alongside of this single-minded

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts for the Times*, vol. ii, ed. 1839; *Records of the Church*, No. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Tracts for the Times*, No. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* No. 32.



reversion to the ideals of the Dark Ages—a phenomenon not unconnected with the revival of romanticism by Scott and Chateaubriand—there was going on a movement of modernism, of which one of the overt traces is Milman's *History of the Jews* (1829), a work to-day regarded as harmless even by the orthodox, but sufficient in its time to let Newman see whither religious "Liberalism" was heading.

Other and later researches dug much deeper into the problems of religious historiography. The Unitarian C. C. HENNELL produced an *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838), so important for its time as to be thought worth translating into German by Strauss; and this found a considerable response from the educated English public of its day. In the preface to his second edition (1841) Hennell spoke very plainly of "the large and probably increasing amount of unbelief in all classes around us"; and made the then remarkably courageous declarations that in his experience "neither deism, pantheism, nor even atheism indicates modes of thought incompatible with uprightness and benevolence"; and that "the real or affected horror which it is still a prevailing custom to exhibit towards their names would be better reserved for those of the selfish, the cruel, the bigot, and other tormentors of mankind." It was in the circle of Hennell that MARIAN EVANS, later to become famous as GEORGE ELIOT, grew into a rationalist in despite of her religious temperament; and it was she who, when Hennell's bride gave up the task, undertook the toil of translating Strauss's *Leben Jesu*—though at many points she "thought him wrong."<sup>1</sup> In the churches he had of course no overt acceptance. At this stage, English orthodoxy was of such a cast that the pious Tregelles, himself fiercely opposed to all forms of rationalism, had to complain that the most incontrovertible corrections of the current text of the New Testament were angrily denounced.<sup>2</sup>

In the next generation THEODORE PARKER in the United States, developing his critical faculty chiefly by study of the Germans, at the cost of much obloquy forced some knowledge of critical results and a measure of theistic or pantheistic rationalism on the attention of the orthodox world; promoting at the same time a semi-philosophic, semi-ethical reaction against the Calvinistic theology of Jonathan Edwards, theretofore prevalent among the orthodox of New England. In the old country a number of writers developed new movements of criticism from theistic points of view. F. W.

<sup>1</sup> Cross's *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Account of the Printed Text of the Greek N. T.*, 1854, pref. and pp. 47, 112-13, 266.

NEWMAN, the scholarly brother of John Henry,<sup>1</sup> produced a book entitled *The Soul* (1849), and another, *Phases of Faith* (1853), which had much influence in promoting rationalism of a rather rigidly theistic cast. R. W. MACKAY in the same period published two learned treatises, *A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Christianity* (1854), notably scientific in method for its time; and *The Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews* (1850), which won the admiration of Buckle; "George Eliot" translated Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1854) under her own name, Marian Evans; and W. R. GREG, one of the leading publicists of his day, put forth a rationalist study of *The Creed of Christendom: Its Foundations Contrasted with its Superstructure* (1850), which has gone through many editions and is still reprinted. In 1864 appeared *The Prophet of Nazareth*, by Evan Powell Meredith, who had been a Baptist minister in Wales. The book is a bulky prize essay on the theme of New Testament eschatology, which develops into a deistic attack on the central Christian dogma and on gospel ethics. Another zealous theist, THOMAS SCOTT, whose pamphlet-propaganda on deistic lines had so wide an influence during many years, produced an *English Life of Jesus* (1871), which, though less important than the works of Strauss and less popular than those of Renan, played a considerable part in the disintegration of the traditional faith among English churchmen. Still the primacy in critical research on scholarly lines lay with the Germans; and it was the results of their work that were co-ordinated, from a theistic standpoint,<sup>2</sup> in the anonymous work, *Supernatural Religion* (1874-77), a massive and decisive performance, too powerful to be disposed of by the episcopal and other attacks made upon it.<sup>3</sup> Since its assimilation the orthodox or inspirationist view of the gospels has lost credit among competent scholars even within the churches. The battleground is now removed to the problem of the historicity of the ostensible origins of the cult; and scholarly orthodoxy takes for granted many positions which fifty years ago were typical of "German rationalism."

12. In France systematic criticism of the sacred books recommenced in the second half of the century with such writings as

<sup>1</sup> A third brother, Charles Robert, became an atheist. This, as well as his psychic infirmity, insures him sufficiently severe treatment at the hands of his theistic brother in the introduction to the latter's *Contributions Chiefly to the Early History of the late Cardinal Newman*, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> Latterly abandoned by the learned author, who before his death disclosed his name—W. R. Cassels.

<sup>3</sup> See the testimonies of Pfleiderer, *The Development of Theology since Kant*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 397, and Dr. Samuel Davidson, *Introd. to the Study of the New Testament*, pref. to 2nd ed.



those of P. LARROQUE (*Examen Critique des doctrines de la religion chrétienne*, 1860); GUSTAVE D'EICHTHAL (*Les Évangiles*, ptie. i, 1863); and ALPHONSE PEYRAT (*Histoire élémentaire et critique de Jésus*, 1864); whereafter the rationalistic view was applied with singular literary charm, if with imperfect consistency, by RENAN in his series of seven volumes on the origins of Christianity, and with more scientific breadth of view by ERNEST HAVET in his *Christianisme et ses Origines* (1872, etc.). Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863) especially has been read throughout the civilized world. It has been quite justly pronounced, by German and other critics, a romance; but no other "life" properly so called has been anything else, Strauss's first *Life* being an analysis rather than a construction; and the epithet was but an unwitting avowal that to accept the gospels, barring miracles, as biography—which is what Renan did—is to be committed to the unhistorical. He began by accepting the fourth as equipollent with the synoptics; and upon this Strauss in his second *Life* confidently called for a recantation, which came in due course. But Renan, in his fitful way, had critical glimpses which were denied to Strauss—for instance, as to the material of the Sermon on the Mount. The whole series of the *Origines*, which wound up with *Marc Aurèle* (1882), has a similar fluctuating value, showing on the whole a progressive critical sense. The *Saint Paul*, for example, at the close suddenly discards the traditional view previously accepted in *Les Apôtres*, and recognizes that the ministry of Paul can have been no more than a propaganda of small conventicles, whose total membership throughout the Empire could not have been above a thousand. But Renan's total service consisted rather in a highly artistic and winning application of rational historical methods to early Christian history, with the effect of displacing the traditionist method, than in any lasting or comprehensive solution of the problem of the origins. Havet's survey is both corrective and complementary to his. Renan's influence on opinion throughout the world, however, was enormous, were it only because he was one of the most finished literary artists of his time.

### SECTION 3.—POETRY AND GENERAL LITERATURE

1. The whole imaginative literature of Europe, in the generation after the French Revolution, reveals directly or indirectly the transmutation that the eighteenth century had worked in religious thought. Either it reacts against or it develops the rationalistic movement. In France the literary reaction is one of the first factors in the

orthodox revival. Its leader and type was Chateaubriand, in whose typical work, the *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), lies the proof that, whatever might be the "shallowness" of Voltairism, it was profundity beside the philosophy of the majority who repelled it. On one who now reads it with the slightest scientific preparation, the book makes an impression in parts of something like fatuity. The handling of the scientific question at the threshold of the inquiry is that of a man incapable of a scientific idea. All the accumulating evidence of geology and palæontology is disposed of by the grotesque theorem that God made the world out of nothing with all the marks of antiquity upon it—the oaks at the start bearing "last year's nests"—on the ground that, "if the world were not at once young and old, the great, the serious, the moral would disappear from nature, for these sentiments by their essence attach to antique things."<sup>1</sup> In the same fashion the fable of the serpent is with perfect gravity homologated as a literal truth, on the strength of an anecdote about the charming of a rattlesnake with music.<sup>2</sup> It is humiliating, but instructive, to realize that only a century ago a "Christian reaction," in a civilized country, was inspired by such an order of ideas; and that in the nation of Laplace, with his theory in view, it was the fashion thus to prattle in the taste of the Dark Ages.<sup>3</sup> The book is merely the eloquent expression of a nervous recoil from everything savouring of cool reason and clear thought, a recoil partly initiated by the sheer stress of excitement of the near past; partly fostered by the vague belief that freethinking in religion had caused the Revolution; partly enhanced by the tendency of every warlike period to develop emotional rather than reflective life. What was really masterly in Chateaubriand was the style; and sentimental pietism had now the prestige of fine writing, so long the specialty of the other side. Yet a generation of monarchism served to wear out the ill-based credit of the literary reaction; and *belles lettres* began to be rationalistic as soon as politics began again to be radical. Thus the prestige of the neo-Christian school was already spent before the revolution of 1848;<sup>4</sup> and the inordinate vanity of Chateaubriand, who died in that year, had undone his special influence still earlier. He had created merely a literary mode and sentiment.

2. The literary history of France since his death decides the question, so far as it can be thus decided. From 1848 till our own day it has been predominantly naturalistic and non-religious. After

<sup>1</sup> Ptie. i, liv. i, ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* i, liv. iii, ch. ii.

<sup>3</sup> It is further to be remembered, however, that Mr. Matthew Arnold saw fit to defend Chateaubriand, calling him "great," when his fame was being undone by common sense.

<sup>4</sup> C. Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 55-56, 124, 204.



Guizot and the Thierry's, the nearest approach to Christianity by an influential French historian is perhaps in the case of the very heterodox Edgar Quinet. MICHELET was a mere heretic in the eyes of the faithful, Saisset describing his book *Du Prêtre, de la Femme, et de la Famille* (1845), as a "renaissance of Voltaireanism."<sup>1</sup> His whole brilliant History, indeed, is from beginning to end rationalistic, challenging as it does all the decorous traditions, exposing the failure of the faith to civilize, pronouncing that "the monastic Middle Age is an age of idiots" and the scholastic world which followed it an age of artificially formed fools,<sup>2</sup> flouting dogma and discrediting creed over each of their miscarriages.<sup>3</sup> And he was popular, withal, not only because of his vividness and unfailing freshness, but because his convictions were those of the best intelligence around him. In poetry and fiction the predominance of one or other shade of free-thinking is signal. Balzac, who grew up in the age of reaction, makes essentially for rationalism by his intense analysis; and after him the difficulty is to find a great French novelist who is not frankly rationalistic. George Sand will probably not be claimed by orthodoxy; and BEYLE, CONSTANT, FLAUBERT, MÉRIMÉE, ZOLA, DAUDET, MAUPASSANT, and the DE GONCOURTS make a list against which can be set only the names of M. Bourget, an artist of the second order, and of the distinguished *décadent* Huysmans, who became a Trappist after a life marked by a philosophy and practice of an extremely different complexion.

3. In French poetry the case is hardly otherwise. BÉRANGER, who passed for a Voltairean, did indeed claim to have "saved from the wreck an indestructible belief";<sup>4</sup> and Lamartine goes to the side of Christianity; but de Musset, the most inspired of *décadents*, was no more Christian than Heine, save for what a critic has called "la banale religiosité de l'Espoir en Dieu";<sup>5</sup> and the pessimist Baudelaire had not even that to show. De Musset's absurd attack on Voltaire in his Byronic poem, *Rolla*, well deserves the same epithets. It is a mere product of hysteria, representing neither knowledge nor reflection. The grandiose theism of VICTOR HUGO,

<sup>1</sup> *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire*, tom. vii, *Renaissance*, introd. § 6.

<sup>3</sup> M. Faguet writes (*Études sur le XIXe Siècle*, p. 352) that "Michelet croit à l'âme plus qu'à Dieu, encore que profondément déiste. Les théories philosophiques modernes lui étaient pénibles." This may be true, though hardly any evidence is offered on the latter head; but when M. Faguet writes, "Est-il chrétien? Je n'en sais rien....mais il sympathise avec la pensée chrétienne," he seems to ignore the preface to the later editions of the *Histoire de la révolution française*. To pronounce Christianity, as Michelet there does, essentially anti-democratic, and therefore hostile to the Revolution, was, for him, to condemn it.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Sainte-Beuve, cited by Levallois, *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 951.

again, is stamped only with his own image and superscription; and in his great contemporary LECONTE DE LISLE we have one of the most convinced and aggressive freethinkers of the century, a fine scholar and a self-controlled pessimist, who felt it well worth his while to write a little *Popular History of Christianity* (1871) which would have delighted d'Holbach. It is significant, on the other hand, that the exquisite religious verse of Verlaine was the product of an incurable neuropath, like the later work of Huysmans, and stands for decadence pure and simple. While French *belles lettres* thus in general made for rationalism, criticism was naturally not behindhand. Sainte-Beuve, the most widely appreciative though not the most scientific or just of critics, had only a literary sympathy with the religious types over whom he spent so much effusive research;<sup>1</sup> EDMOND SCHERER was an unbeliever almost against his will; TAINÉ, though reactionary on political grounds in his latter years, was the typical French rationalist of his time; and though M. Brunetière, whose preferences were all for Bossuet, made "the bankruptcy of science" the text of his very facile philosophy, the most scientific and philosophic head in the whole line of French critics, the late ÉMILE HENNEQUIN, was wholly a rationalist; and even the rather reactionary Jules Lemaitre did not maintain his early attitude of austerity towards Renan.

4. In England it was due above all to Shelley that the very age of reaction was confronted with unbelief in lyric form. His immature *Queen Mab* was vital enough with conviction to serve as an inspiration to a whole host of unlettered freethinkers not only in its own generation but in the next. Its notes preserved, and greatly expanded, the tract entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, for which he was expelled from Oxford; and against his will it became a people's book, the law refusing him copyright in his own work, on the memorable principle that there could be no "protection" for a book setting forth pernicious opinions. Whether he might not in later life, had he survived, have passed to a species of mystic Christianity, reacting like Coleridge, but with a necessary difference, is a question raised by parts of the *Hellas*. Gladstone seems to have thought

<sup>1</sup> "L'incrédulité de Sainte-Beuve était sincère, radicale, et absolue. Elle a été invariable et invincible pendant trente ans. Voilà la vérité" (Jules Levallois, *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, préf. p. xxxiii). M. Levallois, who writes as a theist, was one of Sainte-Beuve's secretaries. M. Zola, who spoke of the famous critic's rationalism as "une négation n'osant conclure," admitted later that it was hardly possible for him to speak more boldly than he did (*Documents Littéraires*, 1881, pp. 314, 325-28). And M. Lavissee has shown (as cited above, p. 406) with what courage he supported Duruy in the Senate against the attacks of the exasperated clerical party. See also his letter of 1867 to Louis Viardot in the *avant-propos* to that writer's *Libre Examen: Apologie d'un Incrédule*, 6e édit. 1881, p. 3.



that he had in him such a potentiality. But Shelley's work, as done, sufficed to keep for radicalism and rationalism the crown of song as against the final Tory orthodoxy<sup>1</sup> of the elderly Wordsworth and of Southey; and Coleridge's zeal for (amended) dogma came upon him after his hour of poetic transfiguration was past.

And even Coleridge, who held the heresies of a modal Trinity and the non-expiatory character of the death of Christ, was widely distrusted by the pious, and expressed himself privately in terms which would have outraged them. Miracles, he declared, "are supererogatory. The law of God and the great principles of the Christian religion would have been the same had Christ never assumed humanity. It is for these things, and for such as these, for telling unwelcome truths, that I have been termed an atheist. It is for these opinions that William Smith assured the Archbishop of Canterbury that I was (what half the clergy are in *their lives*) an atheist. Little do these men know what atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an atheist." Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 47. But at other times Coleridge was a defender of the faith, while condemning the methods of the evidential school. *Id.* pp. 13-14, 31.

On the other side, Scott's honest but unintellectual romanticism, as we know from Newman, certainly favoured the Tractarian reaction, to which it was aesthetically though hardly emotionally akin. Yet George Eliot could say in later life that it was the influence of Scott that first unsettled her orthodoxy;<sup>2</sup> meaning, doubtless, that the prevailing secularity of his view of life and his objective handling of sects and faiths excluded even a theistic solution. Scott's orthodoxy was in fact nearly on all fours with his Jacobitism—a matter of temperamental loyalty to a tradition.<sup>3</sup> But the far more potent influence of BYRON, too wayward to hold a firm philosophy, but too intensely alive to realities to be capable of Scott's feudal orthodoxy, must have counted much for heresy even in England, and was one of the literary forces of revolutionary revival for the whole of Europe. Though he never came to a clear atheistical decision as did Shelley,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That Wordsworth was not an orthodox Christian is fairly certain. Both in talk and in poetry he put forth a pantheistic doctrine. Cp. Benn, *Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 227-29; and Coleridge's letter of Aug. 8, 1820, in Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., of S. T. Coleridge, 3rd ed. 1864, pp. 56-57.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 226, 309 sq.) has some interesting discussions on Scott's relation to religion, but does not take full account of biographical data and of Scott's utterances outside of his novels. The truth probably is that Scott's brain was one with "watertight compartments."

<sup>3</sup> At the age of twenty-five we find him writing to Gifford: "I am no bigot to infidelity, and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man I should be charged with denying the existence of God" (letter of June 18, 1813).

and often in private gave himself out for a Calvinist, he so handled theological problems in his *Cain* that he, like Shelley, was refused copyright in his work;<sup>1</sup> and it was widely appropriated for free-thinkers' purposes. The orthodox Southey was on the same grounds denied the right to suppress his early revolutionary drama, *Wat Tyler*, which accordingly was made to do duty in Radical propaganda by freethinking publishers. Keats, again, though he melodiously declaimed, in a boyish mood, against the scientific analysis of the rainbow, and though he never assented to Shelley's impeachments of Christianity, was in no active sense a believer in it, and after his long sickness met death gladly without the "consolations" ascribed to creed.<sup>2</sup>

5. One of the best-beloved names in English literature, Charles Lamb, is on several counts to be numbered with those of the free-thinkers of his day—who included Godwin and Hazlitt—though he had no part in any direct propaganda. Himself at most a Unitarian, but not at all given to argument on points of faith, he did his work for reason partly by way of the subtle and winning humanism of such an essay as *New Year's Eve*, which seems to have been what brought upon him the pedantically pious censure of Southey, apparently for its lack of allusion to a future state; partly by his delicately-entitled letter, *The Tombs in the Abbey*, in which he replied to Southey's stricture. "A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original" had been Southey's pompous criticism, in a paper on *Infidelity*.<sup>3</sup> In his reply, Lamb commented on Southey's life-long habit of scoffing at the Church of Rome, and gravely repudiated the test of orthodoxy for human character.

Lamb's words are not generally known, and are worth remembering. "I own," he wrote, "I never could think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeable or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles; others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men I ever knew was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most

<sup>1</sup> By the Court of Chancery, in 1822, the year in which copyright was refused to the *Lectures* of Dr. Lawrence. Harriet Martineau, *History of the Peace*, ii, 87.

<sup>2</sup> W. Sharp, *Life of Keats*, 1892, pp. 86-87, 90, 117-18.

<sup>3</sup> On reading Lamb's severe rejoinder, Southey, in distress, apologized, and Lamb at once relented (*Life and Letters of John Rickman*, by Orlo Williams, 1912, p. 225). Hence the curtailment of Lamb's letter in the ordinary editions of his works.



scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we to wish the character false for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?" Of the freethinking and unpopular Hazlitt, who had soured towards Lamb in his perverse way, the essayist spoke still more generously. Of Leigh Hunt he speaks more critically, but with the same resolution to stand by a man known as a heretic. But the severest flout to Southey and his Church is in the next paragraph, where, after the avowal that "the last sect with which you can remember me to have made common profession were the Unitarians," he tells how, on the previous Easter Sunday, he had attended the service in Westminster Abbey, and when he would have lingered afterwards among the tombs to meditate, was "turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street, with feelings which I could not help, but not very congenial to the day or the discourse. I do not know," he adds, "that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your churches."

These words were published in the *London Magazine* in 1825; but in the posthumous collected edition of the *Essays of Elia* all the portions above cited were dropped, and the paragraph last quoted from was modified, leaving out the last words. The essay does not seem to have been reprinted in full till it appeared in R. H. Shepherd's edition of 1878. But the original issue in the *London Magazine* created a tradition among the lovers of Lamb, and his name has always been associated with some repute for freethinking. There is further very important testimony as to Lamb's opinions in one of Allsopp's records of the conversation of Coleridge:—

"No, no; Lamb's skepticism has not come lightly, nor is he a skeptic [*sic*: Query, *scoffer*?]. The harsh reproof to Godwin for his contemptuous allusion to Christ before a well-trained child proves that he is not a skeptic [*? scoffer*]. His mind, never prone to analysis, seems to have been disgusted with the hollow pretences, the false reasonings and absurdities of the rogues and fools with whom all establishments, and all creeds seeking to become established, abound. I look upon Lamb as one hovering between earth and heaven; neither hoping much nor fearing anything. It is curious that he should retain many usages which he learnt or adopted in the fervour of his early religious feelings, now that his faith is in a state of suspended animation. Believe me, who know him well, that Lamb, say what he will, has more of the *essentials* of Christianity than ninety-nine out of a hundred professing Christians. He has all that would still have been Christian had Christ never lived or been made manifest upon earth." (Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 46.) In connection with the frequently cited anecdote as to Lamb's religious feeling given in Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* (rep. p. 253), also by Hazlitt (*Winterslow*, essay ii, ed.

1902, p. 39), may be noted the following, given by Allsopp: "After a visit to Coleridge, during which the conversation had taken a religious turn, Leigh Hunt.....expressed his surprise that such a man as Coleridge should, when speaking of Christ, always call him Our Saviour. Lamb, who had been exhilarated by one glass of that gooseberry or raisin cordial which he has so often anathematized, stammered out: 'Ne-ne-never mind what Coleridge says; he is full of fun.'"

6. While a semi-Bohemian like Lamb could thus dare to challenge the reigning bigotry, the graver English writers of the first half of the century who had abandoned or never accepted orthodoxy felt themselves for the most part compelled to silence or ostensible compliance. It was made clear by Carlyle's posthumous *Reminiscences* that he had early turned away from Christian dogma, having in fact given up a clerical career because of unbelief. Later evidence abounds. At the age of fifteen, by his own account, he had horrified his mother with the question: "Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?"<sup>1</sup> Of his college life he told: "I studied the evidences of Christianity for several years, with the greatest desire to be convinced, but in vain. I read Gibbon, and then first clearly saw that Christianity was not true. Then came the most trying time of my life."<sup>2</sup> Goethe, he claimed, led him to peace; but philosophic peace he never attained. "He was contemptuous to those who held to Christian dogmas; he was angry with those who gave them up; he was furious with those who attacked them. If equanimity be the mark of a Philosopher, he was of all great-minded men the least of a Philosopher."<sup>3</sup> To all freethinking work, scholarly or other, he was hostile with the hostility of a man consciously in a false position. Strauss's *Leben Jesu* he pronounced, quite late in life, "a revolutionary and ill-advised enterprise, setting forth in words what all wise men had in their minds for fifty years past, and thought it fittest to hold their peace about."<sup>4</sup> He was, in fact, so false to his own doctrine of veracity as to disparage all who spoke out; while privately agreeing with Mill as to the need for speaking out.<sup>5</sup> Even Mill did so only partially in his lifetime, as in his address to the St. Andrews students (1867), when, "in the reception given to the Address, he was most struck by the vociferous applause of the divinity students at the freethought passage."<sup>6</sup> In the first half of the century such displays of courage were rare indeed. Only

<sup>1</sup> William Allingham: *A Diary*, 1907, p. 253. Cp. p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Allingham, as cited, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 211. Carlyle said the same thing to Moncure Conway.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Prof. Bain's *J. S. Mill*, pp. 157, 191; Froude's *London Life of Carlyle*, i, 458.

<sup>6</sup> Bain, p. 128.



after the death of Romilly was it tacitly avowed, by the publication of a deistic prayer found among his papers, that he had had no belief in revelation.<sup>1</sup> Much later in the century, HARRIET MARTINEAU, for openly avowing her unbelief, incurred the angry public censure of her own brother.

Despite his anxious caution, Carlyle's writing conveyed to susceptible readers a non-Christian view of things. We know from a posthumous writing of Mr. Froude's that, when that writer had gone through the university and taken holy orders without ever having had a single doubt as to his creed, Carlyle's books "taught him that the religion in which he had been reared was but one of many dresses in which spiritual truth had arrayed itself, and that the creed was not literally true so far as it was a narrative of facts."<sup>2</sup> It was presumably from the *Sartor Resartus* and some of the Essays, such as that on Voltaire—perhaps, also, negatively from the general absence of Christian sentiment in Carlyle's works—that such lessons were learned; and though it is certain that many non-zealous Christians saw no harm in Carlyle, there is reason to believe that for multitudes of readers he had the same awakening virtue. It need hardly be said that his friend Emerson exercised it in no less degree. Mr. Froude was remarkable in his youth for his surrender of the clerical profession, in the teeth of a bitter opposition from his family, and further for his publication of a freethinking romance, *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849); but he went far to conciliate Anglican orthodoxy by his *History*. The romance had a temporary vogue rather above its artistic merits as a result of being publicly burned by the authorities of Exeter College, Oxford, of which he was a Fellow.<sup>3</sup>

7. This attitude of orthodoxy, threatening ostracism to any avowed freethinker who had a position to lose, must be kept in mind in estimating the English evolution of that time. A professed man of science could write in 1838 that "the new mode of interpreting the Scriptures which has sprung up in Germany is the darkest cloud which lowers upon the horizon of that country.....The Germans have been conducted by some of their teachers to the borders of a precipice, one leap from which will plunge them into deism." He added that in various parts of Europe "the heaviest calamity impending over the whole fabric of society in our time is the lengthening stride of bold skepticism in some parts, and the more stealthy onwards-creeping

<sup>1</sup> See Brougham's letters in the *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, 1879, pp. 333-37. Brougham is deeply indignant, not at the fact, but at the indiscreet revelation of it—as also at the similar revelation concerning Pitt (p. 334).

<sup>2</sup> *My Relations with Carlyle*, 1903, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Morning Post*, March 9, 1849.

step of critical cavil in others."<sup>1</sup> Such declamation could terrorize the timid and constrain the prudent in such a society as that of early Victorian England. The prevailing note is struck in Macaulay's description of Charles Blount as "an infidel, and the head of a small school of infidels who were troubled with a morbid desire to make converts."<sup>2</sup> All the while, Macaulay was himself privately "infidel";<sup>3</sup> but he cleared his conscience by thus denouncing those who had the courage of their opinions. In this simple fashion some of the sanest writers in history were complacently put below the level of the commonplace dissemblers who aspersed them; and the average educated man saw no baseness in the procedure.

The opinion deliberately expressed in this connection by the late Professor Bain is worth noting:—

"It can at last be clearly seen what was the motive of Carlyle's perplexing style of composition. We now know what his opinions were when he began to write, and that to express them would have been fatal to his success; yet he was not a man to indulge in rank hypocrisy. He accordingly adopted a studied and ambiguous phraseology, which for long imposed upon the religious public, who put their own interpretation upon his mystical utterances, and gave him the benefit of any doubt. In the *Life of Sterling* he threw off the mask, but still was not taken at his word. Had there been a perfect tolerance of all opinions, he would have begun as he ended; and his strain of composition, while still mystical and high-flown, would never have been identified with our national orthodoxy.

"I have grave doubts as to whether we possess Macaulay's real opinions on religion. His way of dealing with the subject is so like the hedging of an unbeliever that, without some good assurance to the contrary, I must include him also among the imitators of Aristotle's 'caution.'.....

"When Sir Charles Lyell brought out his *Antiquity of Man*, he too was cautious. Knowing the dangers of his footing, he abstained from giving an estimate of the extension of time required by the evidences of human remains. Society in London, however, would not put up with this reticence, and he had to disclose at dinner parties what he had withheld from the public—namely, that in his opinion the duration of man could not be less than 50,000 years" (*Practical Essays*, p. 274.)

<sup>1</sup> *Germany*, by Bisset Hawkins, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P., Inspector of Prisons, late Professor at King's College, etc., 1838, p. 171. <sup>2</sup> *History*, ch. xix. Student's ed. ii, 411.

<sup>3</sup> Sometimes he gives a clue; and we find Brougham privately denouncing him for his remark (Essay on *Ranke's History of the Popes*, 6th par.) that to try "without the help of revelation to prove the immortality of man" is vain. "It is next thing to preaching atheism," shouts Brougham (Letter of October 20, 1840, in *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, p. 333), who at the same time hotly insisted that Cuvier had made an advance in Natural Theology by proving that there must have been one divine interposition after the creation of the world—to create species. (*Id.* p. 337.)



8. Thus for a whole generation honest and narrow-minded believers were trained to suppose that their views were triumphant over all attacks,<sup>1</sup> and to see in "infidelity" a disease of an ill-informed past; and as the Church had really gained in conventional culture as well as in wealth and prestige in the period of reaction, the power of mere convention to override ideas was still enormous. But through the whole stress of reaction and conservatism, even apart from the positive criticism of creed which from time to time forced its head up, there is a visible play of a new spirit in the most notable of the serious writing of the time. Carlyle undermined orthodoxy even in his asseveration of unreasoned theism; Emerson disturbs it alike when he acclaims mystics and welcomes evolutionary science; and the whole inspiration of Mill's *Logic* no less than of his *Liberty* is something alien to the principle of authority. Of Ruskin, again, the same may be asserted in respect of his many searching thrusts at clerical and lay practice, his defence of Colenso, and the obvious disappearance from his later books of the evangelical orthodoxy of the earlier.<sup>2</sup> Thus the most celebrated writers of serious English prose in the latter half of the century were in a measure associated with the spirit of critical thought on matters religious. In a much stronger degree the same thing may be predicated finally of the writer who in the field of English *belles lettres*, apart from fiction, came nearest them in fame and influence. Matthew Arnold, passing insensibly from the English attitude of academic orthodoxy to that of the humanist for whom Christ is but an admirable teacher and God a "Something not ourselves which makes for righteousness," became for the England of his later years the favourite pilot across the bar between supernaturalism and naturalism. Only in England, perhaps, could his curious gospel of church-going and Bible-reading atheism have prospered, but there it prospered exceedingly. Alike as poet and as essayist, even when essaying to disparage Colenso or to confute the Germans where they jostled his predilection for the Fourth Gospel, he was a disintegrator of tradition, and, in his dogmatic way, a dissolver of dogmatism. When, therefore, beside the four names just mentioned the British public placed those of the philosophers Spencer, Lewes, and Mill, and the scientists Darwin, Huxley, Clifford, and Tyndall, they could not but recognize that the mind of the age was divorced from the nominal faith of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> In 1830, for instance, we find a Scottish episcopal D.D. writing that "Infidelity has had its day; it, depend upon it, will never be revived—NO MAN OF GENIUS WILL EVER WRITE ANOTHER WORD IN ITS SUPPORT." Morehead, *Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the author's *Modern Humanists*, pp. 189-94.

9. In English fiction, the beginning of the end of genuine faith was apparent to the prophetic eyes of Wilberforce and Robert Hall, of whom the former lamented the total absence of Christian sentiment from nearly all the successful fiction even of his day;<sup>1</sup> and the latter avowed the pain with which he noted that Miss Edgeworth, whom he admired for her style and art, put absolutely no religion in her books,<sup>2</sup> while Hannah More, whose principles were so excellent, had such a vicious style. With Thackeray and Dickens, indeed, serious fiction might seem to be on the side of faith, both being liberally orthodox, though neither ventured on religious romance; but with GEORGE ELIOT the balance began to lean the other way, her sympathetic treatment of religious types counting for little as against her known rationalism. At the end of the century almost all of the leading writers of the higher fiction were known to be either rationalists or simple theists; and against the heavy metal of Mr. Meredith, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Moore (whose sympathetic handling of religious motives suggests the influence of Huysmans), and the didactic-deistic Mrs. Humphry-Ward, orthodoxy can but claim artists of the third or lower grades. The championship of some of the latter may be regarded as the last humiliation of faith.

In 1905 there was current a vulgar novel entitled *When it was Dark*, wherein was said to be drawn a blood-curdling picture of what would happen in the event of a general surrender of Christian faith. Despite some episcopal approbation, the book excited much disgust among the more enlightened clergy. The preface to Miss Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* may serve to convey to the many readers who cannot peruse the works of that lady an idea of the temper in which she vindicates her faith. Another popular novelist of a low artistic grade, the late Mr. Seton-Merriman, has avowed his religious soundness in a romance with a Russian plot, entitled *The Sowers*. Referring to the impressions produced by great scenes of Nature, he writes: "These places and these times are good for convalescent atheists and such as pose as unbelievers—the cheapest form of notoriety" (p. 168). The novelist's own Christian ethic is thus indicated: "He had Jewish blood in his veins, which..... carried with it the usual tendency to cringe. It is in the blood; it is part of that which the people who stood without Pilate's

<sup>1</sup> *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System* (1797), 8th ed. p. 368. Wilberforce points with chagrin to the superiority of Mohammedan writers in these matters.

<sup>2</sup> "In point of tendency I should class her books among the most irreligious I ever read," delineating good characters in every aspect, "and all this without the remotest allusion to Christianity, the only true religion." Cited in O. Gregory's *Brief Memoir of Robert Hall*, 1833, p. 242. The context tells how Miss Edgeworth avowed that she had not thought religion necessary in books meant for the upper classes.



palace took upon themselves and their children" (p. 59). But the enormous mass of modern novels includes some tolerable pleas for faith, as well as many manifestoes of agnosticism. One of the works of the late "Edna Lyall," *We Two*, was notable as the expression of the sympathy of a devout, generous, and amiable Christian lady with the personality and career of Mr. Bradlaugh.

10. Among the most artistically gifted of the English story-writers and essayists of the last generation of the century was RICHARD JEFFERIES (d. 1887), who in *The Story of My Heart* (1883) has told how "the last traces and relics of superstitions acquired compulsorily in childhood" finally passed away from his mind, leaving him a Naturalist in every sense of the word. In the *Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* published by Sir Walter Besant in 1888 it is asserted that on his deathbed Jefferies returned to his faith, and "died listening with faith and love to the words contained in the Old Book." A popular account of this "conversion" accordingly became current, and was employed to the usual purpose. As has been shown by a careful student, and as was admitted on inquiry by Sir Walter Besant, there had been no conversion whatever, Jefferies having simply listened to his wife's reading without hinting at any change in his convictions.<sup>1</sup> Despite his biographer's express admission of his error, Christian journals, such as the *Spectator*, have burked the facts; one, the *Christian*, has piously charged dishonesty on the writer who brought them to light; and a third, the *Salvationist War Cry*, has pronounced his action "the basest form of chicanery and falsehood."<sup>2</sup> The episode is worth noting as indicating the qualities which still attach to orthodox propaganda.

11. Though Shelley was anathema to English Christians in his own day, his fame and standing steadily rose in the generations after his death. Nor has the balance of English poetry ever reverted to the side of faith. Even Tennyson, who more than once struck at rationalism below the belt, is in his own despite the poet of doubt as much as of credence, however he might wilfully attune himself to the key of faith; and the unparalleled optimism of Browning evolved a form of Christianity sufficiently alien to the historic creed.<sup>3</sup> In CLOUGH and MATTHEW ARNOLD, again, we have the positive record of surrendered faith. Alongside of Arnold, SWINBURNE put

<sup>1</sup> Art. "The Faith of Richard Jefferies," by H. S. Salt, in *Westminster Review*, August, 1905, rep. as pamphlet by the R. P. A., 1906.

<sup>2</sup> The writer of these scurrilities is Mr. Bramwell Booth, *War Cry*, May 27, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Mrs. Sutherland Orr's article on "The Religious Opinions of Robert Browning" in the *Contemporary Review*, December, 1891, p. 878; and the present writer's *Tennyson and Browning as Teachers*, 1903.

into his verse the freethinking temper that Leconte de Lisle reserved for prose; and the ill-starred but finely gifted JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.") was no less definitely though despairingly an unbeliever. Among our later poets, finally, the balance is pretty much the same. Mr. Watson has declared in worthily noble diction for a high agnosticism, and the late John Davidson defied orthodox ethics in the name of his very antinomian theology;<sup>1</sup> while on the side of the regulation religion—since Mr. Yeats is but a stray Druid—can be cited at best the regimental psalmody of Mr. Kipling, lyrist of trumpet and drum; the stained-glass Mariolatrics of the late Francis Thompson; the declamatory orthodoxy of Mr. Noyes; and the Godism of W. E. Henley, whereat the prosaic godly look askance.

12. Of the imaginative literature of the United States, as of that of England, the same generalization broadly holds good. The incomparable Hawthorne, whatever his psychological sympathy with the Puritan past, wrought inevitably by his art for the loosening of its intellectual hold; POE, though he did not venture till his days of downfall to write his *Eureka*, thereby proves himself an entirely non-Christian theist; and EMERSON'S poetry, no less than his prose, constantly expresses his pantheism; while his gifted disciple THOREAU, in some ways a more stringent thinker than his master, was either a pantheist or a Lucretian theist, standing aloof from all churches.<sup>2</sup> The economic conditions of American life have till recently been unfavourable to the higher literature, as apart from fiction; but the unique figure of WALT WHITMAN stands for a thoroughly naturalistic view of life;<sup>3</sup> Mr. HOWELLS appears to be at most a theist; Mr. HENRY JAMES has not even exhibited the bias of his gifted brother to the theism of their no less gifted father; and some of the most esteemed men of letters since the Civil War, as Dr. WENDELL HOLMES and Colonel WENTWORTH HIGGINSON, have been avowedly on the side of rationalism, or, as the term goes in the States, "liberalism." Though the tone of ordinary conversation is more often reminiscent of religion in the United States than in England, the novel and the newspaper have been perhaps more thoroughly secularized there than here; and in the public honour

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of his *Theatrocrat*, which he pronounced "the most profound and original of English books," Mr. Davidson in a newspaper article proclaimed himself on socio-political grounds an anti-Christian. "I take the first resolute step out of Christendom," was his claim (*Daily Chronicle*, December 20, 1905).

<sup>2</sup> See *Talks with Emerson*, by C. J. Woodbury, 1890, pp. 93-94.

<sup>3</sup> It was in his old age that Whitman tended most to "theize" Nature. In conversation with Dr. Moncure Conway, he once used the expression that "the spectacle of a mouse is enough to stagger a sextillion of infidels." Dr. Conway replied: "And the sight of the cat playing with the mouse is enough to set them on their feet again"; whereat Whitman tolerantly smiled.



done to so thorough a rationalist as the late Dr. Moncure Conway at the hands of his *alma mater*, the Dickinson College, West Virginia, may be seen the proof that the official orthodoxy of his youth has disappeared from the region of his birth.

13. Of the vast modern output of *belles lettres* in continental Europe, finally, a similar account is to be given. The supreme poet of modern Italy, LEOPARDI, is one of the most definitely rationalistic as well as one of the greatest philosophic poets in literature; CARDUCCI, the greatest of his successors, was explicitly anti-Christian; and despite all the claims of the Catholic socialists, there is little modern Catholic literature in Italy of any European value. One of the most distinguished of modern Italian scholars, Professor A. de GUBERNATIS, has in his *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (1874) explicitly treated the Christian legend as a myth. In Germany we have seen Goethe and Schiller distinctly counting for naturalism; and of Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825) an orthodox historian declares that his "religion was a chaotic fermenting of the mind, out of which now deism, then Christianity, then a new religion, seems to come forth."<sup>1</sup> The naturalistic line is found to be continued in HEINRICH VON KLEIST, the unhappy but masterly dramatist of *Der Zerbrochene Krug*, one of the truest geniuses of his time; and above all in HEINE, whose characteristic profession of reconciling himself on his deathbed with the deity he imaged as "the Aristophanes of heaven"<sup>2</sup> serves so scantily to console the orthodox lovers of his matchless song. His criticism of Kant and Fichte is a sufficient clue to his serious convictions; and that "God is all that there is"<sup>3</sup> is the sufficient expression of his pantheism. The whole purport of his brilliant sketch of the *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1834; 2nd ed. 1852) is a propaganda of the very spirit of freethinking, which constitutes for Germany at once a literary classic and a manifesto of rationalism. As he himself said of the return of the aged Schelling to Catholicism, we may say of Heine, that a deathbed reversion to early beliefs is a pathological phenomenon.

The use latterly made of Heine's deathbed re-conversion by orthodoxy in England is characteristic. The late letters and conversations in which he said edifying things of God and the Bible are cited for readers who know nothing of the context, and almost as little of the speaker. He had similarly praised the Bible in 1830 (Letter of July, in B. iii of his volume on

<sup>1</sup> Kahn, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Geständnisse*, end (Werke, ed. 1876, iv, 59).

<sup>3</sup> *Zur Gesch. der Religi. und Philos. in Werke*, ed. cited, iii, 80.

Börne—*Werke*, vii, 160). To the reader of the whole it is clear that, while Heine's verbal renunciation of his former pantheism, and his characterization of the pantheistic position as a "timid atheism," might have been made independently of his physical prostration, his profession of the theism at which he had formerly scoffed is only momentarily serious, even at a time when such a reversion would have been in no way surprising. His return to and praise of the Bible, the book of his childhood, during years of extreme suffering and utter helplessness, was in the ordinary way of physiological reaction. But inasmuch as his thinking faculty was never extinguished by his tortures, he chronically indicated that his religious talk was a half-conscious indulgence of the overstrained emotional nature, and substantially an exercise of his poetic feeling—always as large a part of his psychosis as his reasoning faculty. Even in deathbed profession he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, his language being that of a deism "scarcely distinguishable in any essential element from that of Voltaire or Diderot" (Strodtmann, *Heine's Leben und Werke*, 2te Aufl. ii, 386). "My religious convictions and views," he writes in the preface to the late *Romancero*, "remain free of all churchism.....I have abjured nothing, not even my old heathen Gods, from whom I have parted in love and friendship." In his will he peremptorily forbade any clerical procedure at his funeral; and his feeling on that side is revealed in his sad jests to his friend Meissner in 1850. "If I could only go out on crutches!" he exclaimed; adding: "Do you know where I should go? Straight to church." On his friends expressing disbelief, he went on: "Certainly, to church! Where should a man go on crutches? Naturally, if I could walk without crutches, I should go to the laughing boulevards or the Jardin Mabille." The story is told in England without the conclusion, as a piece of "Christian Evidence."

But even as to his theism Heine was never more than wilfully and poetically a believer. In 1849 we find him jesting about "God" and "the Gods," declaring he will not offend the *lieber Gott*, whose vultures he knows and respects. "Opium is also a religion," he writes in 1850. "Christianity is useless for the healthy.....for the sick it is a very good religion." "If the German people in their need accept the King of Prussia, why should not I accept the personal God?" And in speaking of the postscript to the *Romancero* he writes in 1851: "Alas, I had neither time nor mood to say there what I wanted—namely, that I die as a Poet, who needs neither religion nor philosophy, and has nothing to do with either. The Poet understands very well the symbolic idiom of Religion, and the abstract jargon of Philosophy; but neither the religious gentry nor those of philosophy will ever understand the Poet." A few weeks before his



death he signs a New Year letter, "Nebuchadnezzar II, formerly Prussian Atheist, now Lotosflower-adorer." At this time he was taking immense doses of morphia to make his tortures bearable. A few hours before his death a querying pietist got from him the answer: "God will pardon me; it is his business." The *Geständnisse*, written in 1854, ends in absolute irony; and his alleged grounds for giving up atheism, sometimes quoted seriously, are purely humorous (*Werke*, iv, 33). If it be in any sense true, as he tells in the preface to the *Romancero*, that "the high clerisy of atheism pronounced its anathema" over him—that is to say, that former friends denounced him as a weak turncoat—it needed only the publication of his Life and Letters to enable freethinkers to take an entirely sympathetic view of his case, which may serve as a supreme example of "the martyrdom of man." On the whole question see Strodtmann, as cited, ii, 372 sq., and the *Geständnisse*, which should be compared with the earlier written fragments of *Briefe über Deutschland* (*Werke*, iii, 110), where there are some significant variations in statements of fact.

Since Heine, German *belles lettres* has not been a first-rate influence in Europe; but some of the leading novelists, as AUERBACH and HEYSE, are well known to have shared in the rational philosophy of their age; and the Christianity of Wagner, whose precarious support to the cause of faith has been welcomed chiefly by its heteroclitic adherents, counts for nothing in the critical scale.<sup>1</sup>

14. But perhaps the most considerable evidence, in *belles lettres*, of the predominance of rationalism in modern Europe is to be found in the literary history of the Scandinavian States and Russia. The Russian development indeed had gone far ere the modern Scandinavian literatures had well begun. Already in the first quarter of the century the poet Poushkin was an avowed heretic; and Gogol even let his art suffer from his preoccupations with the new humanitarian ideas; while the critic BIÉLINSKY, classed by Tourguénief as the Lessing of Russia,<sup>2</sup> was pronouncedly rationalistic,<sup>3</sup> as was his contemporary the critic GRANOVSKY,<sup>4</sup> reputed the finest Russian stylist of his day. At this period *belles lettres* stood for every form of intellectual influence in Russia,<sup>5</sup> and all educated thought was moulded by it. The most perfect artistic result is the fiction of the freethinker TOURGUÉNIEF,<sup>6</sup> the Sophocles

<sup>1</sup> See Ernest Newman's *Study of Wagner*, 1899, p. 390, note, as to the vagueness of Wagnerians on the subject.

<sup>2</sup> Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, 2e édit. p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> See Comte de Vogüé's *Le roman russe*, p. 218, as to his propaganda of atheism.

<sup>4</sup> Arnaudo, *Le Nihilisme et les Nihilistes*, French tr. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Tikhomirov, p. 344.

<sup>6</sup> "Il [Tourguénief] était libre-penseur, et détestait l'apparat religieux d'une manière toute particulière." I. Pavlovsky, *Souvenirs sur Tourguénief*, 1887, p. 242.

of the modern novel. His two great contemporaries, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, count indeed for supernaturalism; but the truly wonderful genius of the former was something apart from his philosophy, which was merely childlike; and the latter, the least masterly if the most strenuous artist of the three, made his religious converts in Russia chiefly among the uneducated, and was in any case sharply antagonistic to orthodox Christianity. It does not appear that the younger writer, Potapenko, a fine artist, is orthodox, despite his extremely sympathetic presentment of a superior priest; and the still younger Gorky is an absolute Naturalist.

15. In the Scandinavian States, again, there are hardly any exceptions to the freethinking tendency among the leading living men of letters. In the person of the abnormal religionist Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) a new force of criticism began to stir in Denmark. Setting out as a theologian, Kierkegaard gradually developed, always on quasi-religious lines, into a vehement assailant of conventional Christianity, somewhat in the spirit of Pascal, somewhat in that of Feuerbach, again in that of Ruskin; and in a temper recalling now a Berserker and now a Hebrew prophet. The general effect of his teaching may be gathered from the mass of the work of HENRIK IBSEN, who was his disciple, and in particular from Ibsen's *Brand*, of which the hero is partly modelled on Kierkegaard.<sup>1</sup> Ibsen, though his *Brand* was counted to him for righteousness by the Churches, showed himself a thorough-going naturalist in all his later work; BJÖRNSEN was an active freethinker; the eminent Danish critic, GEORG BRANDES, early avowed himself to the same effect; and his brother, the dramatist, EDWARD BRANDES, was elected to the Danish Parliament in 1871 despite his declaration that he believed in neither the Christian nor the Jewish God. Most of the younger *littérateurs* of Norway and Sweden seem to be of the same cast of thought.

#### SECTION 4.—THE NATURAL SCIENCES

1. The power of intellectual habit and tradition had preserved among the majority of educated men, to the end of the eighteenth century, a notion of deity either slightly removed from that of the ancient Hebrews or ethically purified without being philosophically transformed, though the astronomy of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton had immensely modified the Hebraic conception of the

<sup>1</sup> See the article "Un Précurseur d'Henrik Ibsen, Søren Kierkegaard," in the *Revue de Paris*, July 1, 1901.



physical universe. We have seen that Newton did not really hold by the Christian scheme—he wrote, at times, in fact, as a pantheist—but some later astronomers seem to have done so. When, however, the great LAPLACE developed the nebular hypothesis, previously guessed at by Bruno and outlined by Kant, orthodox psychological habit was rudely shaken as regards the Biblical account of creation; and like every other previous advance in physical science this was denounced as atheistic<sup>1</sup>—which, as we know, it was, Laplace having declared in reply to Napoleon that he had no need of the God hypothesis. Confirmed in essentials by all subsequent science, Laplace's system widens immensely the gulf between modern cosmology and the historic theism of the Christian era; and the subsequent concrete developments of astronomy, giving as they do such an insistent and overwhelming impression of physical infinity, have made the "Christian hypothesis"<sup>2</sup> fantastic save for minds capable of enduring any strain on the sense of consistency. Paine had brought the difficulty vividly home to the common intelligence; and though the history of orthodoxy is a history of the success of institutions and majorities in imposing incongruous conformities, the perception of the incongruity on this side must have been a force of disintegration. The freethinking of the French astronomers of the Revolution period marks a decisive change; and as early as 1826 we find in a work on Jewish antiquities by a Scotch clergyman a very plain indication<sup>3</sup> of disbelief in the Hebrew story of the stopping of the sun and moon, or (alternatively) of the rotation of the earth. It is typical of the tenacity of religious delusion that a quarter of a century later this among other irrational credences was contended for by the Swiss theologian Gaussen,<sup>4</sup> and by the orthodox majority elsewhere, when for all scientifically trained men they had become untenable. And that the general growth of scientific thought was disintegrating among scientific men the old belief in miracles may be gathered from an article, remarkable in its day, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1814 (No. 46), and was "universally attributed to Prof. Leslie,"<sup>5</sup> the distinguished physicist.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. A. D. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1896, i, 17, 22.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase is used by a French Protestant pastor. *La vérité chrétienne et la doute moderne* (Conférences), 1879, pp. 24–25.

<sup>3</sup> *Antiquities of the Jews*, by William Brown, D.D., Edinburgh, 1826, i, 121–22. Brown quotes "from a friend" a demonstration of the monstrous consequences of a stoppage of the earth's rotation.

<sup>4</sup> *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Eng. trans. Edinburgh, 1850, pp. 246–49. Gaussen elaborately argues that if eighteen minutes were allowed for the stoppage of the earth's rotation, no shock would occur. Finally, however, he argues that there may have been a mere refraction of the sun's rays—an old theory, already set forth by Brown.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. C. E. Edmonds, *Introd. to rep. of Leland's View of the Deistical Writers*, Tegg's ed. 1837, p. xxiii.

Reviewing the argument of Laplace's essay, *Sur les probabilités*, it substantially endorsed the thesis of Hume that miracles cannot be proved by any testimony.

Leslie's own case is one of the milestones marking the slow recovery of progress in Britain after the Revolution. His appointment to the chair of Mathematics, after Playfair, at Edinburgh University in 1805 was bitterly resisted by the orthodox on the score that he was a disbeliever in miracles and an "infidel" of the school of Hume, who had been his personal friend. Nevertheless he again succeeded Playfair in the chair of Physics in 1819, and was knighted in 1832. The invention of the hygrometer and the discovery of the relations of light and heat had begun to count for more in science than the profession of orthodoxy.

2. From France came likewise the impulse to a naturalistic handling of biology, long before the day of Darwin. The protagonist in this case was the physician P.-J.-G. CABANIS (1737–1808), the colleague of Laplace in the School of Sciences. Growing up in the generation of the Revolution, Cabanis had met, in the salon of Madame Helvétius, d'Holbach, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Laplace, Condillac, Volney, Franklin, and Jefferson, and became the physician of Mirabeau. His treatise on the *Rapports du physique et du morale de l'homme* (1796–1802)<sup>1</sup> might be described as the systematic application to psychology of that "positive" method to which all the keenest thought of the eighteenth century had been tending, yet with much of the literary or rhetorical tone by which the French writers of that age had nearly all been characterized. For Cabanis, the psychology of Helvétius and Condillac had been hampered by their ignorance of physiology;<sup>2</sup> and he easily put aside the primary errors, such as the "equality of minds" and the entity of "the soul," which they took over from previous thinkers. His own work is on the whole the most searching and original handling of the main problems of psycho-physiology that had yet been achieved; and to this day its suggestiveness has not been exhausted.

But Cabanis, in his turn, made the mistake of Helvétius and Condillac. Not content with presenting the results of his study in the province in which he was relatively master, he undertook to reach ultimate truth in those of ethics and philosophy, in which he was not so. In the preface to the *Rapports* he lays down an

<sup>1</sup> The work consists of twelve "Mémoires" or treatises, six of which were read in 1796–1797 at the Institute. They appeared in book form in 1802.

<sup>2</sup> *Rapports*, Ier Mémoire, § ii, near end. (Ed. 1843, p. 73.) Cp. Préf. (pp. 46–47).



emphatically agnostic conviction as to final causes: "ignorance the most invincible," he declares, is all that is possible to man on that issue.<sup>1</sup> But not only does he in his main work freely and loosely generalize on the phenomena of history and overleap the ethical problem: he penned shortly before his death a *Lettre sur les causes premières*, addressed to Fauriel,<sup>2</sup> in which the aging intelligence is seen reverting to *a priori* processes, and concluding in favour of a "sort of stoic pantheism"<sup>3</sup> with a balance towards normal theism and a belief in immortality. The final doctrine did not in the least affect the argument of the earlier, which was simply one of positive science; but the clerical world, which had in the usual fashion denounced the scientific doctrine, not on the score of any attack by Cabanis upon religion, but because of its incompatibility with the notion of the soul, naturally made much of the mystical,<sup>4</sup> and accorded its framer authority from that moment.

As for the conception of "vitalism" put forward in the Letter to Fauriel by way of explanation of the phenomena of life, it is but a reversion to the earlier doctrine of Stahl, of which Cabanis had been a partisan in his youth.<sup>5</sup> The fact remains that he gave an enduring impulse to positive science,<sup>6</sup> his own final vacillation failing to arrest the employment of the method he had inherited and improved. Most people know him solely through one misquotation, the famous phrase that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." This is not only an imperfect statement of his doctrine: it suppresses precisely the idea by which Cabanis differentiates from pure "sensationalism." What he taught was that "*impressions, reaching the brain, set it in activity, as aliments reaching the stomach excite it to a more abundant secretion of gastric juice.....The function proper to the first is to perceive particular impressions, to attach to them signs, to combine different impressions, to separate them, to draw from them judgments and determinations, as the function of the second is to act on nutritive substances,*" etc.<sup>7</sup> It is after this statement of the known process, and after pointing out that there is as much of pure inference in the one case as in the other, that he concludes: "The brain in a manner digests impressions, and makes organically the secretion of thought"

<sup>1</sup> Ed. cited, p. 54. Cp. p. 207, note.

<sup>2</sup> Ueberweg, ii, 339.

<sup>3</sup> Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, ii, 134.

<sup>4</sup> "Since Cabanis, the referring back of mental functions to the nervous system has remained dominant in physiology, whatever individual physiologists may have thought about final causes" (Lange, ii, 70). Compare the tribute of Cabanis's orthodox editor Cerise (ed. 1843, *Introd.* pp. xlii-iii).

<sup>5</sup> *Rapports*, IIe Mémoire, near end. (Ed. cited, p. 122.)

<sup>6</sup> Not published till 1824.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. Luchaire, as cited, p. 36.

and this conclusion, he points out, disposes of the difficulty of those who "cannot conceive how judging, reasoning, imagining, can ever be anything else than feeling. The difficulty ceases when one recognizes, in these different operations, the action of the brain upon the impressions which are passed on to it." The doctrine is, in short, an elementary truth of psychological science, as distinguished from the pseudo-science of the Ego considered as an entity. To that pseudo-science Cabanis gave a vital wound; and his derided formula is for true science to-day almost a truism. The attacks made upon his doctrine in the next generation only served to emphasize anew the eternal dilemma of theism. On the one hand his final "vitalism" was repugnant to those who, on traditional lines, insisted upon a distinction between "soul" and "vital force"; on the other hand, those who sought to make a philosophic case for theism against him made the usual plunge into pantheism, and were reproached accordingly by the orthodox.<sup>1</sup> All that remained was the indisputable "positive" gain.

3. In England the influence of the French stimulus in physiology was seen even more clearly than that of the great generalization of Laplace. Professor William Lawrence (1783-1867), the physiologist, published in 1816 an *Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology*, containing some remarks on the nature of life, which elicited from the then famous Dr. Abernethy a foul attack in his *Physiological Lectures* delivered before the College of Surgeons. Lawrence was charged with belonging to the party of French physiological skeptics whose aim was to "loosen those restraints on which the welfare of mankind depends."<sup>2</sup> In the introductory lecture of his course of 1817 before the College of Physicians, Lawrence severely retaliated, repudiating the general charge, but reasserting that the dependence of life on organization is as clear as the derivation of daylight from the sun. The war was adroitly carried at once into the enemy's territory in the declaration that "The profound, the virtuous, and fervently pious Pascal acknowledged, what all sound theologians maintain, that the immortality of the soul,

<sup>1</sup> See the already cited introduction of Cerise, who solved the problem religiously by positing "a force which executes the plans of God without our knowledge or intervention" (p. xix). He goes on to lament the pantheism of Dr. Dubois (whose *Examen des doctrines de Cabanis, Gall, et Broussais* (1842) was put forward as a vindication of the "spiritual" principle), and of the German school of physiology represented by Oken and Burdach.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, 8th ed. 1840, pp. 1-3. The aspersion of Abernethy is typical of the orthodox malignity of the time. Cabanis in his preface had expressly contended for the all-importance of morals. The orthodox Dr. Cerise, who edited his book in 1843, while acknowledging the high character of Cabanis, thought fit to speak of "the materialists" as "interested in abasing man" (*introd.* p. xxi). On the score of fear of demoralization, the champions of "spirit" themselves exhibited the maximum of baseness.



the great truths of religion, and the fundamental principles of morals cannot be demonstrably proved by mere reason; and that revelation alone is capable of dissipating the uncertainties which perplex those who inquire too curiously into the sources of these important principles. All will acknowledge that, as no other remedy can be so perfect and satisfactory as this, no other can be necessary, if we resort to this with firm faith."<sup>1</sup> The value of this pronouncement is indicated later in the same volume by subacid allusions to "those who regard the Hebrew Scriptures as writings composed with the assistance of divine inspiration," and who receive Genesis "as a narrative of actual events." Indicating various "grounds of doubt respecting inspiration," the lecturer adds that the stories of the naming of the animals and their collection in the ark, "if we are to understand them as applied to the living inhabitants of the whole world, are zoologically impossible."<sup>2</sup> On the principle then governing such matters Lawrence was in 1822, on the score of his heresies, refused copyright in his lectures, which were accordingly reprinted many times in a cheap stereotyped edition, and thus widely diffused.<sup>3</sup>

This hardy attack was reinforced in 1819 by the publication of Sir T. C. Morgan's *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life*, wherein the physiological materialism of Cabanis is quietly but firmly developed, and a typical sentence of his figures as a motto on the title-page. The method is strictly naturalistic, alike on the medical and on the philosophic side; and "vitalism" is argued down as explicitly as is anthropomorphism.<sup>4</sup> As a whole the book tells notably of the stimulus of recent French thought upon English.

4. A more general effect, however, was probably wrought by the science of geology, which in a stable and tested form belongs to the nineteenth century. Of its theoretic founders in the eighteenth century, Werner and Dr. JAMES HUTTON (1726-1797), the latter and more important<sup>5</sup> is known from his *Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge* (1794) to have been consciously a freethinker on more grounds than that of his naturalistic science; and his *Theory of the World* (1795) was duly denounced as atheistic.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the physical infinity of the universe almost forced the orthodox to concede a vast cosmic process of some kind as preceding the shaping

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence's *Lectures*, p. 9, note.

<sup>2</sup> Yet Lawrence was created a baronet two months before his death. So much progress had been made in half a century.

<sup>3</sup> Work cited, pp. 355 sq., 375 sq. The tone is at times expressive of a similar attitude towards historical religion—e.g.: "Human testimony is of so little value.....that it cannot be received with sufficient caution. To doubt is the beginning of wisdom." *Id.* p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 505.

<sup>5</sup> White, as cited, i, 222-23, gives a selection of the language in general use among theologians on the subject.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* pp. 168-69.

of the earth and solar system, the formation of these within six days was one of the plainest assertions in the sacred books; and every system of geology excluded such a conception. As the evidence accumulated, in the hands of men mostly content to deprecate religious opposition,<sup>1</sup> there was duly evolved the quaint compromise of the doctrine that the Biblical six "days" meant six ages—a fantasy still cherished in the pulpit. On the ground of that absurdity, nevertheless, there gradually grew up a new conception of the antiquity of the earth. Thus a popular work on geology such as *The Ancient World*, by Prof. Ansted (1847), could begin with the proposition that "long before the human race had been introduced on the earth this world of ours existed as the habitation of living things different from those now inhabiting its surface." Even the thesis of "six ages," and others of the same order, drew upon their supporters angry charges of "infidelity." Hugh Miller, whose natural gifts for geological research were chronically turned to confusion by his orthodox bias, was repeatedly so assailed, when in point of fact he was perpetually tampering with the facts to save the Scriptures.<sup>2</sup> Of all the inductive sciences geology had been most retarded by the Christian canonization of error.<sup>3</sup> Even the plain fact that what is dry land had once been sea was obstinately distorted through centuries, though Ovid<sup>4</sup> had put the observations of Pythagoras in the way of all scholars; and though Leonardo da Vinci had insisted on the visible evidence; nay, deistic habit could keep even Voltaire, as we saw, preposterously incredulous on the subject. When the scientific truth began to force its way in the teeth of such authorities as Cuvier, who stood for the "Mosaic" doctrine, the effect was proportionately marked; and whether or not the suicide of Miller (1856) was in any way due to despair on perception of the collapse of his reconciliation of geology with Genesis,<sup>5</sup> the scientific demonstration made an end of revelationism for many. What helped most to save orthodoxy from humiliation on the scientific side was the attitude of men like Professor Baden

<sup>1</sup> The early policy of the Geological Society of London (1807), which professed to seek for facts and to disclaim theories as premature (cp. Whewell, iii, 428; Buckle, iii, 392), was at least as much socially as scientifically prudential.

<sup>2</sup> See the excellent monograph of W. M. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller: A Critical Study*, 1905, ch. vi; and cp. Spencer's essay on *Illogical Geology—Essays*, vol. i; and Baden Powell's *Christianity without Judaism*, 1857, p. 254 sq. Miller's friend Dick, the Thurso naturalist, being a freethinker, escaped such error. (Mackenzie, pp. 161-64.)

<sup>3</sup> Cp. the details given by Whewell, iii, 406-408, 411-13, 506-507, as to early theories of a sound order, all of which came to nothing. Steno, a Dane resident in Italy in the seventeenth century, had reached non-Scriptural and just views on several points. Cp. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 215. Leonardo da Vinci and Frascatorio had reached them still earlier. Above, vol. i, p. 371.

<sup>4</sup> *Metamorphoses*, lib. xv.

<sup>5</sup> He had just completed a work on the subject at his death. Cp. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller*, as cited, pp. 134-35, 146-47.



Powell, whose scientific knowledge and habit of mind moved him to attack the Judaism of the Bibliolaters in the name of Christianity, and in the name of truth to declare that "nothing in geology bears the smallest semblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony, torture the interpretation to what extent we may."<sup>1</sup> In 1857 this was very bold language.

5. Still more rousing, finally, was the effect of the science of zoology, as placed upon a broad scientific foundation by CHARLES DARWIN. Here again steps had been taken in previous generations on the right path, without any general movement on the part of scientific and educated men. Darwin's own grandfather, ERASMUS DARWIN, had in his *Zoonomia* (1794) anticipated many of the positions of the French LAMARCK, who in 1801 began developing the views he fully elaborated in 1815, as to the descent of all existing species from earlier forms.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1795 GEOFFROY SAINT-HILAIRE had begun to suspect that all species are variants on a primordial form of life; and at the same time (1794-95) Goethe in Germany had reached similar convictions.<sup>3</sup> That views thus reached almost simultaneously in Germany, England, and France, at the time of the French Revolution, should have to wait for two generations before even meeting the full stress of battle, must be put down as one of the results of the general reaction. Saint-Hilaire, publishing his views in 1828, was officially overborne by the Cuvier school in France. In England, indeed, so late as 1855, we find Sir David Brewster denouncing the Nebular Hypothesis: "that dull and dangerous heresy of the age.....An omnipotent arm was required to give the planets their position and motion in space, and a presiding intelligence to assign to them the different functions they had to perform."<sup>4</sup> And Murchison the geologist was no less emphatic against Darwinism, which he rejected till his dying day (1871).

6. Other anticipations of Darwin's doctrine in England and elsewhere came practically to nothing,<sup>5</sup> as regarded the general opinion, until ROBERT CHAMBERS in 1844 published anonymously his *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, a work which found a wide audience, incurring bitter hostility not only from the clergy but from some specialists who, like Huxley, were later to take the

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and Judaism*, pp. 256-57.

<sup>2</sup> See Charles Darwin's *Historical Sketch* prefixed to the *Origin of Species*.

<sup>3</sup> Meding, as cited by Darwin, 6th ed. i, p. xv. Goethe seems to have had his general impulse from Kilmeyer, who also taught Cuvier. Virchow, *Goethe als Naturforscher*, 1861, Beilage x.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of Newton*, i, 131. Cp. *More Worlds than One*, 1854, pp. vi, 226.

<sup>5</sup> See Darwin's *Sketch*, as cited.

evolutionist view on Darwin's persuasion. Chambers it was that brought the issue within general knowledge; and he improved his position in successive editions. A hostile clerical reader, Whewell, admitted of him, in a letter to a less hostile member of his profession, that, "as to the degree of resemblance between the author and the French physiological atheists, he uses reverent phrases: theirs would not be tolerated in England"; adding: "You would be surprised to hear the contempt and abhorrence with which Owen and Sedgwick speak of the *Vestiges*."<sup>1</sup> Hugh Miller, himself accused of "infidelity" for his measure of inductive candour, held a similar tone towards men of greater intellectual rectitude, calling the liberalizing religionists of his day "vermin" and "reptiles,"<sup>2</sup> and classifying as "degraded and lost"<sup>3</sup> all who should accept the new doctrine of evolution, which, as put by Chambers, was then coming forward to evict his own delusions from the field of science. The young Max Müller, with the certitude born of an entire ignorance of physical science, declared in 1856 that the doctrine of a human evolution from lower types "can never be maintained again," and pronounced it an "unhallowed imputation."<sup>4</sup>

7. "Contempt and abhorrence" had in fact at all times constituted the common Christian temper towards every form of critical dissent from the body of received opinion; and only since the contempt, doubled with criticism, began to be in a large degree retorted on the bigots by instructed men has a better spirit prevailed. Such a reaction was greatly promoted by the establishment of the Darwinian theory. It was after the above-noted preparation, popular and academic, and after the theory of transmutation of species had been definitely pronounced erroneous by the omniscient Whewell,<sup>5</sup> that Darwin produced (1859) his irresistible arsenal of arguments and facts, the *Origin of Species*, expounding systematically the principle of Natural Selection, suggested to him by the economic philosophy of Malthus, and independently and contemporaneously arrived at by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace. The outcry was enormous; and the Church, as always, arrayed itself violently against the new truth. Bishop Wilberforce pointed out in the *Quarterly Review* that "the principle of natural selection is absolutely incompatible with the word of God,"<sup>6</sup> which was perfectly true; and at a famous

<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 16, 1845, in *Life of Whewell*, by Mrs. Stair Douglas, 2nd ed. 1882, pp. 318-19. If this statement be true as to Owen, he shuffled badly in his correspondence with the author of the *Vestiges*. See the *Life of Sir Richard Owen*, 1894, i, 251.

<sup>2</sup> Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller*, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxford Essays*, 1856, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 479-83; *Life*, as above cited. Whewell is said to have refused to allow a copy of the *Origin of Species* to be placed in the Trinity College Library. White, i, 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Foot-Prints of the Creator*, end.

<sup>6</sup> White, i, 70 sq.



meeting of the British Association in 1860 he so travestied the doctrine as to goad Huxley into a fierce declaration that he would rather be a descendant of an ape than of a man who (like the Bishop) plunged into questions with which he had no real acquaintance, only to obscure them and distract his hearers by appeals to religious prejudice.<sup>1</sup> The mass of the clergy kept up the warfare of ignorance; but the battle was practically won within twenty years. In France, Germany, and the United States leading theologians had made the same suicidal declarations, entitling all men to say that, if evolution proved to be true, Christianity was false. Professor Luthardt, of Leipzig, took up the same position as Bishop Wilberforce, declaring that "the whole superstructure of personal religion is built upon the doctrine of creation";<sup>2</sup> leading American theologians pronounced the new doctrine atheistic; and everywhere gross vituperation eked out the theological argument.<sup>3</sup>

8. Thus the idea of a specific creation of all forms of life by an originating deity—the conception which virtually united the deists and Christians of the eighteenth century against the atheists—was at length scientifically exploded. The principle of personal divine rule or providential intervention had now been philosophically excluded successively (1) from astronomy by the system of Newton; (2) from the science of earth-formation by the system of Laplace and the new geology; (3) from the science of living organisms by the new zoology. It only needed that the deistic conception should be further excluded from the human sciences—from anthropology, from the philosophy of history, and from ethics—to complete, at least in outline, the rationalization of modern thought. Not that the process was complete in detail even as regarded zoology. Despite the plain implications of the *Origin of Species*, the doctrine of the *Descent of Man* (1871) came on many as a shocking surprise and evoked a new fury of protest. The lacunæ in Darwin, further, had to be supplemented; and much speculative power has been spent on the task by HAECKEL, without thus far establishing complete agreement. But the desperate stand so long made on the score of the "missing link" seems to have been finally discredited in 1894; and the Judæo-Christian doctrine of special creation and

<sup>1</sup> Edward Clodd, *Thomas Henry Huxley*, 1902, pp. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Luthardt, *Fundamental Truths of Christianity*, Eng. tr. 1865, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> See the many examples cited by White. As late as 1885 the Scottish clergyman Dr. Lee is quoted as calling the Darwinians "gospellers of the gutter," and charging on their doctrine "utter blasphemy against the divine and human character of our incarnate Lord" (White, i, 83). Carlyle is quoted as calling Darwin "an apostle of dirt-worship." His admirers appear to regard him as having made amends by admitting that Darwin was personally charming.

providential design appears, even in the imperfectly educated society of our day, to be already a lost cause.

As we have seen, however, it was not merely the clerical class that resisted the new truth: the men of science themselves were often disgracefully hostile; and that "class" continued to give a sufficiency of support to clericalism. If the study of the physical sciences be no guarantee for recognition of new truth in those sciences, still less is it a sure preparation for right judgment in matters of sociology, or, indeed, for a courageous attitude towards conventions. Spencer in his earlier works used the language of deism<sup>1</sup> at a time when Comte had discarded it. It takes a rare combination of intellectual power, moral courage, and official freedom to permit of such a directly rationalistic propaganda as was carried on by Professor CLIFFORD, or even such as has been accomplished by President ANDREW WHITE in America under the comparatively popular profession of deism. It was only in his leisured latter years that Huxley carried on a general conflict with orthodoxy. In middle age he frequently covered himself by attacks on professed freethinkers; and he did more than any other man of his time in England to conserve the Bible as a school manual by his politic panegyric of it in that aspect at a time when bolder rationalists were striving to get it excluded from the State schools.<sup>2</sup> Other men of science have furnished an abundance of support to orthodoxy by more or less vaguely religious pronouncements on the problem of the universe; so that Catholic and other obscurantist agencies are able to cite from them many quasi-scientific phrases<sup>3</sup>—taking care not to ask what bearing their language has on the dogmas of the Churches. Physicists who attempt to be more precise are rarely found to be orthodox; and the moral and social science of such writers is too often a species of charlatanism. But the whole tendency of natural science, which as such is necessarily alien to supernaturalism, makes for a rejection of the religious tradition; and the real leaders of science are found more and more openly alienated from the creed of faith. We know that Darwin, though the son and grandson of freethinkers, was brought up in ordinary orthodoxy by his mother, and "gave up common religious belief almost independently from his own reflections."<sup>4</sup> All over the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. the *Education*, small ed. pp. 41, 155.

<sup>2</sup> I am informed on good authority that in later life Huxley changed his views on the subject. He had abundant cause. As early as 1879 he is found complaining (pref. to Eng. tr. of Haeckel's *Freedom in Science and Teaching*, p. xvii) of the mass of "falsities at present foisted upon the young in the name of the Church."

<sup>3</sup> See a choice collection in the pamphlet *What Men of Science say about God and Religion*, by A. E. Proctor; Catholic Truth Society.

<sup>4</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ed. 1888, iii, 179.



world that has since been an increasingly common experience among scientific men.

#### SECTION 5.—THE SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

1. A rationalistic treatment of human history had been explicit or implicit in the whole literature of Deism; and had been attempted with various degrees of success by Bodin, Vico, Montesquieu, Mandeville, Hume, Smith, Voltaire, Volney, and Condorcet, as well as by lesser men.<sup>1</sup> So clear had been the classic lead to naturalistic views of social growth in the *Politics* of Aristotle, and so strong the influence of the new naturalistic spirit, that it is seen even in the work of Goguet (1769), who sets out as biblically as Bossuet; while in Germany Herder and Kant framed really luminous generalizations; and a whole group of sociological writers rose up in the Scotland of the middle and latter parts of the century.<sup>2</sup> Here again there was reaction; but in France the orthodox Guizot did much to promote broader views than his own; EUSÈBE SALVERTE in his essay *De la Civilisation* (1813) made a highly intelligent effort towards a general view; and CHARLES COMTE in his *Traité de Législation* (1826) made a marked scientific advance on the suggestive work of Herder. As we have seen, the eclectic Jouffroy put human affairs in the sphere of natural law equally with cosmic phenomena. At length, in the great work of AUGUSTE COMTE, scientific method was applied so effectively and concretely to the general problem that, despite his serious fallacies, social science again took rank as a solid study.

2. In England the anti-revolution reaction was visible in this as in other fields of thought. Hume and Gibbon had set the example of a strictly naturalistic treatment of history; and the clerical Robertson was faithful to their method; but Hallam makes a stand for supernaturalism even in applying a generally scientific critical standard. The majority of historical events he is content to let pass as natural, even as the average man sees the hand of the doctor in his escape from rheumatism, but the hand of God in his escape from a railway accident. Discussing the defeat of Barbarossa at Legnano, Hallam pronounces that it is not "material to allege..... that the accidental destruction of Frederic's army by disease enabled the cities of Lombardy to succeed in their resistance..... Providence reserves to itself various means by which the bonds of the oppressor may be broken; and it is not for human sagacity to anticipate

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether C. A. Walckenaer should be so described. His *Essai sur l'histoire de l'espèce humaine* (1798) has real scientific value.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's *Buckle and his Critics*, 1895.

whether the army of a conqueror shall moulder in the unwholesome marshes of Rome or stiffen with frost in a Russian winter."<sup>1</sup>

But Hallam was nearly the last historian of distinction to vend such nugatory oracles as either a philosophy or a religion of history. Even the oracular Carlyle did not clearly stipulate for "special providences" in his histories, though he leant to that conception; and though Ranke also uses mystifying language, he writes as a Naturalist; while Michelet is openly anti-clerical. Grote was wholly a rationalist; the historic method of his friend and competitor, Bishop Thirlwall, was as non-theological as his; Macaulay, whatever might be his conformities or his bias, wrote in his most secular spirit when exhibiting theological evolution; and George Long indicated his rationalism again and again.<sup>2</sup> It is only in the writings of the most primitively prejudiced of those German historians who eliminate ethics from historiography that the "God" factor is latterly emphasized in ostensibly expert historiography.

3. All study of economics and of political history fostered such views, and at length, in England and America, by the works of DRAPER and BUCKLE, in the sixth and later decades of the century, the conception of law in human history was widely if slowly popularized, to the due indignation of the supernaturalists, who saw the last great field of natural phenomena passing like others into the realm of science. Draper's avowed theism partly protected him from attack; but Buckle's straightforward attacks on creeds and on Churches brought upon him a peculiarly fierce hostility, which was unmollified by his incidental avowal of belief in a future life and his erratic attacks upon unbelievers. For long this hostility told against his sociological teaching. Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* nevertheless clinched the scientific claim by taking sociological law for granted; and the new science has continually progressed in acceptance. In the hands of all its leading modern exponents in all countries—Lester Ward, Giddings, Guyau, Letourneau, Tarde, Ferri, Durkheim, De Greef, Gumpłowicz, Lilienfeld, Schäffle—it has been entirely naturalistic, though some Catholic professors continue to inject into it theological assumptions. It cannot be said, however, that a general doctrine of social evolution is even yet fully established. The problem is complicated by the profoundly contentious issues of practical politics; and in the resulting diffidence of official teachers there arises a notable opening for obscurantism,

<sup>1</sup> *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 11th ed. i, 377.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. his *Decline of the Roman Republic*, 1864, i, 345-47; and note on p. 447 of his translation of Plutarch's *Brutus*, Bohn ed. of *Lives*, vol. iv.



which has been duly forthcoming. In the first half of the century such an eminent Churchman as Dean Milman incurred at the hands of J. H. Newman and others the charge of writing the history of the Jews and of early Christianity in a rationalistic spirit, presenting religion as a "human" phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Later Churchmen, with all their preparation, have rarely gone further.

4. Two lines of scientific study, it would appear, must be thoroughly followed up before the ground can be pronounced clear for authoritative conclusions—those of anthropological archæology (including comparative mythology and comparative hierology) and economic analysis. On both lines, however, great progress has been made; and on the former in particular the result is profoundly disintegrating to traditional belief. The lessons of anthropology had been long available to the modern world before they began to be scientifically applied to the "science of religion." The issues raised by Fontenelle and De Brosses in the eighteenth century were in practice put aside in favour of direct debate over Christian history, dogma, and ethic; though many of the deists dwelt on the analogies of "heathen" and "revealed" religion. As early as 1824 Benjamin Constant made a vigorous attempt to bring the whole phenomena under a general evolutionary conception in his work *De la Religion*.<sup>2</sup> But it was not till the treasure of modern anthropology had been scientifically massed by such students as Theodor Waitz (*Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, 6 Bde. 1859-71) and Adolf Bastian (*Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, 3 Bde. 1860), and above all by Sir EDWARD TYLOR, who first lucidly elaborated the science of it all, that the arbitrary religious conception of the psychic evolution of humanity began to be decisively superseded.

In 1871 Tylor could still say that "to many educated minds there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature; that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals."<sup>3</sup> But the old repulsion had already been profoundly impaired by biological and social science; and Tylor's book met with hardly any of the odium that had been lavished on Darwin and Buckle. "It will

<sup>1</sup> See *The Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 227-33.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to understand the claim made for Hegel by his translator, the Rev. E. B. Speirs, that any student of his lectures on the *Philosophy of Religion* "will be constrained to admit that in them we have the true 'sources' of the evolution principle as applied to the study of religion" (edit. pref. to trans. of work cited, i, p. viii). To say nothing of Fontenelle and De Brosses, Constant had laid out the whole subject before Hegel.

<sup>3</sup> *Primitive Culture*, i, 2.

make me for the future look on religion—a belief in the soul, etc.—from a different point of view," wrote Darwin<sup>1</sup> to Tylor on its appearance. So thoroughly did the book press home the fact of the evolution of religious thought from savagery that thenceforward the science of mythology, which had never yet risen in professional hands to the height of vision of Fontenelle, began to be decisively adapted to the anthropological standpoint.

In the hands of Spencer<sup>2</sup> all the phenomena of primitive mental life—beliefs, practices, institutions—are considered as purely natural data, no other point of view being recognized; and the anthropological treatises of Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) are at the same standpoint. When at length the mass of savage usages which lie around the beginnings of historic religion began to be closely scanned and classified, notably in the great latter-day compilations of Sir J. G. Frazer, what had appeared to be sacred peculiarities of the Christian cult were seen to be but variants of universal primitive practice. Thenceforth the problem for serious inquirers was not whether Christianity was a supernatural revelation—the supernatural is no longer a ground of serious discussion—but whether the central narrative is historical in any degree whatever. The defence is latterly conducted from a standpoint indistinguishable from the Unitarian. But an enormous amount of anthropological research is being carried on without any reference to such issues, the total effect being to exclude the supernaturalist premiss from the study of religion as completely as from that of astronomy.

#### SECTION 6.—PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

1. The philosophy of Kant, while giving the theological class a new apparatus of defence as against common-sense freethinking, forced none the less on theistic philosophy a great advance from the orthodox positions. Thus his immediate successors, Fichte and Schelling, produced systems of which one was loudly denounced as atheistic, and the other as pantheistic,<sup>3</sup> despite its dualism. Neither seems to have had much influence on concrete religious opinion outside the universities;<sup>4</sup> and when Schelling in old age turned Catholic obscurantist, the gain to clericalism was not great. Hegel in turn loosely wrought out a system of which the great merit is to substitute the conception of existence as relation for the nihilistic idealism of Fichte and the unsolved dualism of Schelling. This

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters*, i, 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols. 1876-96.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Saintes, *Hist. crit. du rationalisme en Allemagne*, p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* pp. 322-24.



system he latterly adapted to practical exigencies<sup>1</sup> by formulating, as Kant had recently done, a philosophic Trinity and hardily defining Christianity as "Absolute Religion" in comparison with the various forms of "Natural Religion." Nevertheless, he counted in a great degree as a disintegrating influence, and was in a very practical way anti-Christian. More explicitly than Kant, he admitted that the *Aufklärung*, the freethinking movement of the past generation, had made good its case so far as it went; and though, by the admission of admirers, he took for granted without justification that it had carried its point with the world at large,<sup>2</sup> he was chronically at strife with the theologians as such, charging them on the one hand with deserting the dogmas which he re-stated,<sup>3</sup> and on the other declaring that the common run of them "know as little of God as a blind man sees of a painting, even though he handles the frame."<sup>4</sup> Of the belief in miracles he was simply contemptuous. "Whether at the marriage of Cana the guests got a little more wine or a little less is a matter of absolutely no importance; nor is it any more essential to demand whether the man with the withered hand was healed; for millions of men go about with withered and crippled limbs, whose limbs no man heals." On the story of the marks made for the information of the angel on the Hebrew houses at the Passover he asks: "Would the angel not have known them without these marks?", adding: "This faith has no real interest for Spirit."<sup>5</sup> Such writing, from the orthodox point of view, was not compensated for by a philosophy of Christianity which denaturalized its dogmas, and a presentment of the God-idea and of moral law which made religion alternately a phase of philosophy and a form of political utilitarianism.

As to the impression made by Hegel on most Christians, compare Hagenbach, *German Rationalism* (Eng. tr. of *Kirchengeschichte*), pp. 364-69; Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse*, 5e édit. p. 406; J. D. Morell, *Histor. and Crit. View of the Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1847, ii, 189-91; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 135-41, 176; Eschenmenger, *Die Hegel'sche Religionsphilosophie*, 1834; quoted in Beard's *Voices of the Church*, p. 8; Leo, *Die Hegelingen*, 1838; and Reinhard, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 2nd ed. 1839, pp. 753-54—also cited by Beard, pp. 9-12.

<sup>1</sup> As to Hegel's mental development cp. Dr. Beard on "Strauss, Hegel, and their Opinions," in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> E. Caird, *Hegel*, 1883, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. *Philos. of Religion*, introd. Eng. tr. i, 38-40.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 41. Cp. pp. 216-17.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 219.

The gist of Hegel's rehabilitation of Christianity is well set forth by Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison in his essay on *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel* (rep. in *The Philos. Radicals and other Essays*, 1907), ch. iii. Considered in connection with his demonstration that in politics the Prussian State was the ideal government, it is seen to be even more of an arbitrary and unveridical accommodation to the social environment than Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*. It approximates intellectually to the process by which the neo-Platonists and other eclectics of the classic decadence found a semblance of allegorical or symbolical justification for every item in the old theology. Nothing could be more false to the spirit of Hegel's general philosophy than the representing of Christianity as a culmination or "ultimate" of all religion; and nothing, in fact, was more readily seen by his contemporaries.

We who look back, however, may take a more lenient view of Hegel's process of adaptation than was taken in the next generation by Haym, who, in his *Hegel und seine Zeit* (1857), presented him as always following the prevailing fashion in thought, and lending himself as the tool of reactionary government. Hegel's officialism was in the main probably wholehearted. Even as Kant felt driven to do something for social conservation at the outbreak of the French Revolution, and Fichte to shape for his country the sinister ideal of *The Closed Industrial State*, so Hegel, after seeing Prussia shaken to its foundations at the battle of Jena and being turned out of his own house by the looting French soldiers, was very naturally impelled to support the existing State by quasi-philosophico-religious considerations. It was an abandonment of the true function of philosophy; but it may have been done in all good faith. An intense political conservatism was equally marked in Strauss, who dreaded "demagogy," and in Schopenhauer, who left his fortune to the fund for the widows and families of soldiers killed or injured in the revolutionary strifes of 1848. It came in their case from the same source—an alarmed memory of social convulsion. The fact remains that Hegel had no real part in the State religion which he crowned with formulas.

Not only does Hegel's conception of the Absolute make deity simply the eternal process of the universe, and the divine consciousness indistinguishable from the total consciousness of mankind,<sup>1</sup> but his abstractions lend themselves equally to all creeds;<sup>2</sup> and some of the most revolutionary of the succeeding movements of German

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Morell, as cited, and pp. 195-96; and Feuerbach, as summarized by Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Michelet as cited by Morell, ii, 192-93.



thought—as those of Vatke, Strauss,<sup>1</sup> Feuerbach, and Marx—professedly founded on him. It is certainly a striking testimony to the influence of Hegel that five such powerful innovators as Vatke<sup>2</sup> in Old-Testament, Bruno Bauer and Strauss in New-Testament criticism, Feuerbach in the philosophy of religion, and Marx in social philosophy, should at first fly the Hegelian flag. It can hardly have been that Hegel's formulas sufficed to generate the criticism they all brought to bear upon their subject matter; rather we must suppose that their naturally powerful minds were attracted by the critical and reconstructive aspects of his doctrine; but the philosophy which stimulated them must have had great affinities for revolution, as well as for all forms of the idea of evolution.

2. In respect of his formal championship of Christianity Hegel's method, arbitrary even for him, appealed neither to the orthodox nor, with a few exceptions,<sup>3</sup> to his own disciples, some of whom, as Ruge, at length definitely renounced Christianity.<sup>4</sup> In 1854 Heine told his French readers that there were in Germany "fanatical monks of atheism" who would willingly burn Voltaire as a besotted deist;<sup>5</sup> and Heine himself, in his last years of suffering and of revived poetic religiosity, could see in Hegel's system only atheism. BRUNO BAUER at first opposed Strauss, and afterwards went even further than he, professing Hegelianism all the while.<sup>6</sup> SCHOPENHAUER and HARTMANN in turn being even less sustaining to orthodoxy, and later orthodox systems failing to impress, there came in due course the cry of "Back to Kant," where at least orthodoxy had some formal semblance of sanction.

Hartmann's work on *The Self-Decomposition of Christianity*<sup>7</sup> is a stringent exposure of the unreality of what passed for "liberal Christianity" in Germany a generation ago, and an appeal for a "new concrete religion" of monism or pantheism as a bulwark against Ultramontanism. On this monism, however, Hartmann insisted on grounding his pessimism; and with this pessimistic pantheism he hoped to outbid Catholicism against the "irreligious" Strauss and the liberal Christians—in his view no less irreligious.

<sup>1</sup> As to Strauss cp. Beard, as above cited, pp. 21-22, 30; and Zeller, *David Friedrich Strauss*, Eng. tr. pp. 35, 47-48, 71-72, etc.

<sup>2</sup> As to Vatke see Pfeiderer, as cited, p. 252 sq.; Cheyne, *Founders of O. T. Criticism*, 1893, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Dr. Hutchison Stirling. See his trans. of Schwegler's *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, 6th ed. p. 438 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Baur, last cit. p. 389.

<sup>5</sup> *Geständnisse*. Werke, iv, 33. Cp. iii, 110.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. Hagenbach, pp. 369-72; Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 387-88. On Bauer's critical development and academic career see Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.* pp. 386-89.

<sup>7</sup> *Die Selbstzersetzung des Christenthums und die Religion der Zukunft*, 2te Aufl. 1874 trans. in Eng. as *The Religion of the Future*, 1886.

It does not seem to have had much acceptance. On the whole, the effect of all German philosophy has probably been to make for the general discredit of theistic thinking, the surviving forms of Hegelianism being little propitious to current religion. And though Schopenhauer and NIETZSCHE can hardly be said to carry on the task of philosophy either in spirit or in effect, yet the rapid intensification of hostility to current religion which their writings in particular manifest<sup>1</sup> must be admitted to stand for a deep revolt against the Kantian compromise. And this revolt was bound to come about. The truth-shunning tactic of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel—aiming at the final discrediting of the *Aufklärung* as a force that had done its work, and could find no more to do, however it be explained and excused—was a mere expression of their own final lack of scientific instinct. It is hard to believe that thinkers who had perceived and asserted the fact of progression in religion could suppose that true philosophy consisted in putting a stop on a priori grounds to the historical analysis, and setting up an "ultimate" of philosophic theory. The straightforward investigators, seeking simply for truth, have passed on to posterity a spirit which, correcting their inevitable errors, reaches a far deeper and wider comprehension of religious evolution and psychosis than could be reached by the verbalizing methods of the self-satisfied and self-sufficing metaphysicians. These, so far as they prevailed, did but delay the advance of real knowledge. Their work, in fact, was fatally shaped by the general reaction against the Revolution, which in their case took a quasi-philosophic form, while in France and England it worked out as a crude return to clerical and political authoritarianism.<sup>2</sup>

3. From the collisions of philosophic systems in Germany there emerged two great practical freethinking forces, the teachings of LUDWIG FEUERBACH (1804-76), who was obliged to give up his lecturing at Erlangen in 1830 after the issue of his *Thoughts upon Death and Immortality*, and LUDWIG BÜCHNER, who was deprived of his chair of clinic at Tübingen in 1855 for his *Force and Matter*. The former, originally a Hegelian, expressly broke away from his master, declaring that, whereas Hegel belonged to the "Old Testament" of modern philosophy, he himself would set forth the New, wherein Hegel's fundamentally incoherent treatment of deity (as the total process of things on the one hand, and an objective

<sup>1</sup> See Schopenhauer's dialogues on *Religion and Immortality*, and his essay on *The Christian System* (Eng. tr. by T. B. Saunders), and Nietzsche's *Antichrist*. The latter work is discussed by the writer in *Essays in Sociology*, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Seth Pringle-Pattison, who passes many just criticisms on their work (*Philos. of Relig. in Kant and Hegel*, rep. with *The Philosophical Radicals*), does not seem to suspect this determination.



personality on the other) should be cured.<sup>1</sup> Feuerbach accordingly, in his *Essence of Christianity* (1841) and *Essence of Religion* (1851), supplied one of the first adequate modern statements of the positively rationalistic position as against Christianity and theism, in terms of philosophic as well as historical insight—a statement to which there is no characteristically modern answer save in terms of the refined sentimentalism of the youthful Renan,<sup>2</sup> fundamentally averse alike to scientific precision and to intellectual consistency.

Feuerbach's special service consists in the rebuttal of the metaphysic in which religion had chronically taken refuge from the straightforward criticism of freethinkers, in itself admittedly unanswerable. They had shown many times over its historic falsity, its moral perversity, and its philosophic self-contradiction; and the more astute official defenders, leaving to the less competent the task of re-vindicating miracles and prophecy and defending the indefensible, proceeded to shroud the particular defeat in a pseudo-philosophic process which claimed for all religion alike an indestructible inner truth, in the light of which the instinctive believer could again make shift to affirm his discredited credences. It was this process which Feuerbach exploded, for all who cared to read him. He had gone through it. Intensely religious in his youth, he had found in the teaching of Hegel an attractive philosophic garb for his intuitional thought. But a wider concern than Hegel's for actual knowledge, and for the knowledge of the actual, moved him to say to his teacher, on leaving: "Two years have I attached myself to you; two years have I completely devoted to your philosophy. Now I feel the necessity of starting in the directly opposite way: I am going to study anatomy."<sup>3</sup> It may have been that what saved him from the Hegelian fate of turning to the end the squirrel-cage of conformist philosophy was the personal experience which put him in fixed antagonism to the governmental forces that Hegel was moved to serve. The hostility evoked by his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* completed his alienation from the official side of things, and left him to the life of a devoted truth-seeker—a career as rare in Germany as elsewhere. The upshot was that Feuerbach, in the words of Strauss, "broke the double yoke in which, under Hegel, philosophy and theology still went."<sup>4</sup>

For the task he undertook he had consummately equipped

<sup>1</sup> Baur gives a good summary, *Kirchengeschichte*, pp. 390-94.

<sup>2</sup> "M. Feuerbach et la nouvelle école hégélienne," in *Études d'histoire religieuse*.

<sup>3</sup> A. Kohut, *Ludwig Feuerbach, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 1909, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, p. 50. "Feuerbach a ruiné le système de Hegel et fondé la positivisme." A. Lévy, *La philosophie de Feuerbach et son influence sur la litt. allemande*, 1904, introd. p. xxii.

himself. In a series of four volumes (*History of Modern Philosophy from Bacon to Spinoza*, 1833; *Exposition and Criticism of the Leibnitzian Philosophy*, 1837; *Pierre Bayle*, 1838; *On Philosophy and Christianity*, 1839) he explored the field of philosophy, and re-studied theology in the light of moral and historical criticism, before he produced his masterpiece, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. Here the tactic of Hegel is turned irresistibly on the Hegelian defence; and religion, defiantly declared by Hegel to be an affair of self-consciousness,<sup>1</sup> is shown to be in very truth nothing else. "Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness; knowledge of God is self-knowledge."<sup>2</sup> This of course is openly what Hegelian theism is in effect—philosophic atheism; and though Feuerbach at times disclaimed the term, he declares in his preface that "atheism, at least in the sense of this work, is the secret of religion itself; that religion itself.....in its heart, in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature." In the preliminary section on *The Essence of Religion* he makes his position clear once for all: "A God who has abstract predicates has also an abstract existence.....Not the attribute of the divinity, but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being. Thus what theology and philosophy have held to be God, the Absolute, the Infinite, is not God; but that which they have held not to be God, is God—namely the attribute, the quality, whatever has reality. Hence, he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being—for example, love, wisdom, justice—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing.....These have an intrinsic, independent reality; they force their recognition upon man by their very nature; they are self-evident truths to him; they approve, they attest themselves.....The idea of God is dependent on the idea of justice, of benevolence....."

This is obviously the answer to Baur, who, after paying tribute to the personality of Feuerbach, and presenting a tolerably fair summary of his critical philosophy, can find no answer to it save the inept protest that it is one-sided in respect of its reduction of religion to the subjective (the very course insisted on by a hundred defenders!), that it favours the communistic and other extreme tendencies of the time, and that it brings everything "under the

<sup>1</sup> E.g. "All knowledge, all conviction, all piety.....is based on the principle that in the spirit, as such, the consciousness of God exists immediately with the consciousness of itself." *Philos. of Relig.* Eng. tr. introd. i, 42-43.

<sup>2</sup> *Essence of Christianity*, Eng. tr. 1854, p. 12.



rude rule of egoism."<sup>1</sup> Here a philosophic and an aspersive meaning are furtively combined in one word. The scientific subjectivism of Feuerbach's analysis of religion is no more a vindication or acceptance of "rude egoism" than is the Christian formula of "God's will" a condonation of murder. The restraint of egoism by altruism lies in human character and polity alike for the rationalist and for the irrationalist, as Baur must have known well enough after his long survey of Church history. His really contemptible escape from Feuerbach's criticism, under cover of alternate cries of "Communism" and "egoism"—a self-stultification which needs no comment—is simply one more illustration of the fashion in which, since the time of Kant, philosophy in Germany as elsewhere has been chronically demoralized by resort to non-philosophical tests. "Max Stirner" (pen-name of Johann Caspar Schmidt, 1806-1856) carried the philosophic "egoism" of Feuerbach about as far in words as might be; but his work on the Ego (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 1845) remains an ethical curiosity rather than a force.<sup>2</sup>

4. ARNOLD RUGE (1802-1880), who was of the same philosophical school,<sup>3</sup> gave his life to a disinterested propaganda of democracy and light; and if in 1870 he capitulated to the new Empire, and thereby won a small pension for the two last years of his life, he was but going the way of many another veteran, dazzled in his old age by very old fires. His *Addresses on Religion, its Rise and Fall: to the educated among its Reverers*<sup>4</sup> (1869) is a lucid and powerful performance, proceeding from a mythological analysis of religion to a cordial plea for rationalism in all things. The charge of "materialism" was for him no bugbear. "Truly," he writes, "we are not without the earth and the solar system, not without the plants and the animals, not without head. But whoever has head enough to understand science and its conquests in the field of nature and of mind (*Geist*) knows also that the material world rests in the immaterial, moves in it, and is by it animated, freed, and ensouled; that soul and idea are incarnate in Nature, but that also logic, idea, spirit, and science free themselves out of Nature, become abstracted and as immaterial Power erect their own realm, the realm of spirit in State, science, and art."<sup>5</sup>

5. On Feuerbach's *Essence of Religion* followed the resounding explosion of Büchner's *Force and Matter* (1855), which in large

<sup>1</sup> *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, pp. 393-94.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. A. Lévy, as cited, ch. iv.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ch. ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Reden über Religion, ihr Entstehen und Vergehen, an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verehrern*—a parody of the title of the famous work of Schleiermacher.

<sup>5</sup> Work cited, p. 119.

measure, but with much greater mastery of scientific detail, does for the plain man of his century what d'Holbach in his chief work sought to do for his day. Constantly vilified, even in the name of philosophy, in the exact tone and spirit of animal irritation which marks the religious vituperation of all forms of rationalism in previous ages; and constantly misrepresented as professing to explain an infinite universe when it does but show the hollowness of all supernaturalist explanations,<sup>1</sup> the book steadily holds its ground as a manual of anti-mysticism.<sup>2</sup> Between them, Feuerbach and Büchner may be said to have framed for their age an atheistic "System of Nature," concrete and abstract, without falling into the old error of substituting one apriorism for another. Whosoever endorses Baur's protest against the "one-sidedness" of Feuerbach, who treats of religion on its chosen ground of self-consciousness, has but to turn to Büchner's study of the objective world and see whether his cause fares any better.

6. In France the course of thought had been hardly less revolutionary. Philosophy, like everything else, had been affected by the legitimist restoration; and between Victor Cousin and the other "classic philosophers" of the first third of the century orthodoxy was nominally reinstated. Yet even among these there was no firm coherence. Maine de Biran, one of the shrinking spirits who passed gradually into an intolerant authoritarianism from fear of the perpetual pressures of reason, latterly declared (1821) that a philosophy which ascribed to deity only infinite thought or supreme intelligence, eliminating volition and love, was pure atheism; and this pronouncement struck at the philosophy of Cousin. Nor was this species of orthodoxy any more successful than the furious irrationalism of Joseph De Maistre in setting up a philosophic form of faith, as distinct from the cult of rhetoric and sentiment founded by Chateaubriand. Cousin was deeply distrusted by those who knew him, and at the height of his popularity he was condemned by the more competent minds around him, such as Sainte-Beuve, Comte, and Edgar Quinet.<sup>3</sup> The latter thinker himself counted for a measure of rationalism, though he argued for theism, and undertook to make good the historicity of Jesus against those who challenged it. For

<sup>1</sup> Büchner expressly rejected the term "materialism" because of its misleading implications or connotations. Cp. in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh the discussion* in Pt. ii, ch. i, § 3 (by J. M. R.).

<sup>2</sup> While the cognate works of CARL VOGT and MOLESCHOTT have gone out of print, Büchner's, recast again and again, continues to be republished.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Paul Deschanel, *Figures Littéraires*, 1889, pp. 130-32, 171-73; Lévy-Bruhl, *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. tr. 1903, p. 190; and Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 228.



the rest, even among the ostensibly conservative and official philosophers, Théodore Jouffroy, an eclectic, who held the chair of moral philosophy in the Faculté des Lettres at Paris, was at heart an unbeliever from his youth up,<sup>1</sup> and even in his guarded writings was far from satisfying the orthodox. "God," he wrote,<sup>2</sup> "interposes as little in the regular development of humanity as in the course of the solar system." He added a fatalistic theorem of divine predetermination, which he verbally salved in the usual way by saying that predetermination presupposed individual liberty. Eclecticism thus fell, as usual, between two stools; but it was not orthodoxy that would gain. On another line Jouffroy openly bantered the authoritarians on their appeal to a popular judgment which they declared to be incapable of pronouncing on religious questions.<sup>3</sup>

7. On retrospect, the whole official French philosophy of the period, however conservative in profession, is found to have been at bottom rationalistic, and only superficially friendly to faith. The Abbé Felice de Lamennais declaimed warmly against *L'indifférence en matière de religion* (4 vols. 1818-24), resorting to the old Catholic device, first employed by Montaigne, of turning Pyrrhonism against unbelief. Having ostensibly discredited the authority of the senses and the reason (by which he was to be read and understood), he proceeded in the customary way to set up the ancient standard of the *consensus universalis*, the authority of the majority, the least reflective and the most fallacious. This he sought to elevate into a kind of corporate wisdom, superior to all individual judgment; and he marched straight into the countersense of claiming the pagan consensus as a confirmation of religion in general, while arguing for a religion which claimed to put aside paganism as error. The final logical content of the thesis was the inanity that the majority for the time being must be right.

Damiron, writing his *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIXe Siècle* in 1828, replies in a fashion more amiable than reassuring, commenting on the "strange skepticism" of Lamennais as to the human reason.<sup>4</sup> For himself, he takes up the parable of Lessing, and declares that where Lessing spoke doubtfully, men had now reached conviction. It was no longer a question of whether, but of when, religion was to be recast in terms of fuller intelligence. "In this religious regeneration we shall be to the

<sup>1</sup> Adam, as cited, pp. 227-30.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Mélanges philosophiques* (1833), Eng. trans. (incomplete) by George Ripley, *Philos. Essays of Th. Jouffroy*, Edinburgh, 1839, ii, 32. Ripley, who was one of the American transcendentalist group and a member of the Brook Farm Colony, indicates his own semi-rationalism in his Introductory Note, p. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> *Mélanges philosophiques*, trans. as cited, ii, 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Essai*, cited, i, 232, 237.

Christians what the Christians were to the Jews, and the Jews to the patriarchs: we shall be Christians and something more." The theologian of the future will be half-physicist, half-philosopher. "We shall study God through nature and through men; and a new Messiah will not be necessary to teach us miraculously what we can learn of ourselves and by our natural lights." Christianity has been a useful discipline; but "our education is so advanced that henceforth we can be our own teachers; and, having no need of an extraneous inspiration, we draw faith from science."<sup>1</sup> "Prayer is good, doubtless," but it "has only a mysterious, uncertain, remote action on our environment."<sup>2</sup> All this under Louis Philippe, from a professor at the École Normale. Not to this day has official academic philosophy in Britain ventured to go so far. In France the brains were never out, even under the Restoration. Lamennais himself gave the proof. His employment of skepticism as an aid to faith had been, like Montaigne's, the expression of a temperament slow to reach rational positions, but surely driven thither. As a boy of twelve, when a priest sought to prepare him for communion, he had shown such abnormal incredulity that the priest gave him up; and later he read omnivorously among the deists of the eighteenth century, Rousseau attracting him in particular. Later he passed through a religious crisis, slowly covering ground which others traverse early. He did not become a communicant till he was twenty-two; he entered the seminary only at twenty-seven; and he was ordained only when he was nearly thirty-two.

Yet he had experienced much. Already in 1808 his *Réflexions sur l'état de l'église* had been suppressed by Napoleon's police; in 1814 he had written, along with his brother, in whose seminary he taught mathematics, a treatise maintaining the papal claims; and in the Hundred Days of 1815 he took flight to London. His mind was always at work. His *Essay on Indifference* expressed his need of a conviction; with unbelief he could reckon and sympathize; with indifference he could not; but when the indifference was by his own account the result of reflective unbelief he treated it in the same fashion as the spontaneous form. At bottom, his quarrel was with reason. Yet the very element in his mind which prompted his anti-rational polemic was ratiocinative; and as he slowly reached clearness of thought he came more and more into conflict with Catholicism. It was all very well to flout the individual reason in the name of the universal; but to give mankind a total infallibility

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* pp. 241-43.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 221.



was not the way to satisfy a pope or a Church which claimed a monopoly of the gift. In 1824 he was well received by the pope; but when in 1830 he began to write Liberal articles in the journal *L'Avenir*, in which he collaborated with Lacordaire, the Comte de Montalembert, and other neo-Catholics, offence was quickly taken, and the journal was soon suspended. Lamennais and his disciples Lacordaire and Montalembert went to Rome to plead their cause, but were coldly received; and on their way home in 1832 received at Munich a missive of severe reprimand.

Rendering formal obedience, Lamennais retired, disillusioned, with his friends to his and his brother's estate in Brittany, and began his process of intellectual severance. In January, 1833, he performed mass, and at this stage he held by his artificial distinction between the spheres of faith and reason. In May of that year he declared his determination to place himself "as a writer outside of the Church and Catholicism," declaring that "outside of Catholicism, outside faith, there is reason; outside of the Church there is humanity; I place myself (*je me renferme*) in this sphere."<sup>1</sup> Still he claimed to be *simple fidèle en religion*, and to combine "fidelity in obedience with liberty in science."<sup>2</sup> In January of 1834, however, he had ceased to perform any clerical function; and his *Paroles d'un Croyant*, published in that year, stand for a faith which the Church reckoned as infidelity.

Lacordaire, separating from his insubordinate colleague, published an *Examen de la philosophie de M. de Lamennais*, in which the true papal standpoint was duly taken. Thenceforth Lamennais was an Ishmaelite. Feeling as strongly in politics as in everything else, he was infuriated by the brutal suppression of the Polish rising in 1831-32; and the government of Louis Philippe pleased him as little as that of Charles X had done. In 1841 he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for his brochure *Le pays et le gouvernement* (1840). Shortly before his death in 1854 he claimed that he had never changed: "I have gone on, that is all." But he had in effect changed from a Catholic to a pantheist;<sup>3</sup> and in 1848, as a member of the National Assembly, he more than once startled his colleagues by "an affectation of impiety."<sup>4</sup> On his deathbed he refused to receive the curé of the parish, and by his own wish he was buried without any religious ceremony, in the *fosse commune* of the poor and with no cross on his grave.

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance*, 1858-86, letter of May 26, 1833.

<sup>2</sup> Letters of August 1 and November 25.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 84.

Such a type does not very clearly belong to rationalism; and Lamennais never enrolled himself save negatively under that flag. Always emotional and impulsive, he had in his period of aggressive fervour as a Churchman played a rather sinister part in the matter of the temporary insanity of Auguste Comte, lending himself to the unscrupulous tactics of the philosopher's mother, who did not stick at libelling her son's wife in order to get him put under clerical control.<sup>1</sup> It was perhaps well for him that he was forced out of the Church; for his love of liberty was too subjective to have qualified him for a wise use of power. But the spectacle of such a temperament forced into antagonism with the Church on moral and social grounds could not but stimulate anti-clericalism in France, whatever his philosophy may have done to promote rational thinking.

8. The most energetic and characteristic philosophy produced in the new France was that of AUGUSTE COMTE, which as set forth in the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830-42) practically reaffirmed while it recast and supplemented the essentials of the anti-theological rationalism of the previous age, and in that sense rebuilt French positivism, giving that new name to the naturalistic principle. Though Comte's direct following was never large, it is significant that soon after the completion of his *Cours* we find Saisset lamenting that the war between the clergy and the philosophers, "suspended by the great political commotion of 1830," had been "revived with a new energy."<sup>2</sup> The later effort of Comte to frame a politico-ecclesiastical system never succeeded beyond the formation of a politically powerless sect; and the attempt to prove its consistency with his philosophic system by claiming that from the first he had harboured a plan of social regulation<sup>3</sup> is beside the case. A man's way of thinking may involve intellectual contradictions all through his life; and Comte's did. Positivism in the scientific sense cannot be committed to any one man's scheme for regulating society and conserving "cultus"; and Comte's was merely one of the many evoked in France by the memory of an age of revolutions. It belongs, indeed, to the unscientific and unphilosophic side of his mind, the craving for authority and the temper of ascendancy, which connect with his admiration of the medieval Church. Himself philosophically an atheist, he condemned atheists because they mostly contemned his passion for regimentation. By reason of this idiosyncrasy and of the habitually dictatorial tone of his doctrine,

<sup>1</sup> Littré, *Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive*, pp. 123, 125-26.

<sup>2</sup> Article in 1844, rep. in *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Lévy-Bruhl's *Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. tr. pp. 10-15. M. Lévy-Bruhl really does not attempt to meet Littré's argument, which he puts aside.



he has made his converts latterly more from the religious than from the freethinking ranks. But both in France and in England his philosophy tinged all the new thought of his time, his leading English adherents in particular being among the most esteemed publicists of the day. Above all, he introduced the conception of a "science of society" where hitherto there had ruled the haziest forms of "providentialism." In France the general effect of the rationalistic movement had been such that when TAINE, under the Third Empire, assailed the whole "classic" school in his *Philosophes classiques* (1857), his success was at once generally recognized, and a non-Comtist positivism was thenceforth the ruling philosophy. The same thing has happened in Italy, where quite a number of university professors are explicitly positivist in their philosophic teaching.<sup>1</sup>

9. In Britain, where abstract philosophy after Berkeley had been mainly left to Hume and the Scotch thinkers who opposed him, metaphysics was for a generation practically overridden by the moral and social sciences; Hartley's Christian Materialism making small headway as formulated by him, though it was followed up by the Unitarian Priestley. The reaction against the Revolution, indeed, seems to have evicted everything in the nature of active philosophic thought from the universities in the first decade of the nineteenth century; at Oxford it was taught in a merely traditional fashion, in lamentable contrast to what was going on in Germany;<sup>2</sup> and in Scotland in the 'thirties things had fallen to a similar level.<sup>3</sup> It was over practical issues that new thought germinated in England. The proof of the change wrought in the direction of native thought is seen in the personalities of the men who, in the teeth of the reaction, applied rationalistic method to ethics and psychology. BENTHAM and JAMES MILL were in their kindred fields among the most convinced and active freethinkers of their day, the former attacking both clericalism and orthodoxy;<sup>4</sup> while the latter, no less pronounced in his private opinions, more cautiously built up a rigorously naturalistic psychology in his *Analysis of the Human Mind* (1829). Bentham's utilitarianism was so essentially anti-Christian that he could hardly have been more disliked by discerning theists if he had avowed his share in the authorship of the atheistic *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion*, which, elaborated

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Prof. Botta's chapter in Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philos.* ii, 513-16.

<sup>2</sup> Veitch's *Memoir of Sir William Hamilton*, 1869, p. 54. Cp. Hamilton's own *Discussions*, 1852, p. 187 (rep. of article of 1839). <sup>3</sup> Veitch, p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Church of Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (1818), and *Not Paul but Jesus* (1823), by "Gamaliel Smith."

from his manuscript by no less a thinker than GEORGE GROTE, was published in 1822.<sup>1</sup> Pseudonymous as that essay is, it seeks to guard against the risk of prosecution by the elaborate stipulation that what it discusses is always the influence of *natural* religion on life, revealed religion being another matter. But this is of course the merest stratagem, the whole drift of the book being a criticism of the effects of the current religion on contemporary society. It greatly influenced J. S. Mill, whose essay on *The Utility of Religion* echoes its beginning; and if it had been a little less drab in style it might have influenced many more.

But Bentham's ostensible restriction of his logic to practical problems of law and morals secured him a wider influence than was wielded by any of the higher publicists of his day. The whole tendency of his school was intensely rationalistic; and it indirectly affected all thought by its treatment of economics, which from Hume and Smith onwards had been practically divorced from theology. Even clerical economists, such as Malthus and Chalmers, alike orthodox in religion, furthered naturalism in philosophy in spite of themselves by their insistence on the law of population, which is the negation of divine benevolence as popularly conceived. A not unnatural result was a religious fear of all reasoning whatever, and a disparagement of the very faculty of reason. This, however, was sharply resisted by the more cultured champions of orthodoxy,<sup>2</sup> to the great advantage of critical discussion.

10. When English metaphysical philosophy revived with Sir William Hamilton,<sup>3</sup> it was on the lines of a dialectical resistance to the pantheism of Germany, in the interests of faith; though Hamilton's dogmatic views were always doubtful.<sup>4</sup> Admirably learned, and adroit in metaphysical fence, he always grounded his theism on the alleged "needs of our moral nature"—a declaration of philosophical bankruptcy. The vital issue was brought to the front after his death in the Bampton Lectures (1858) of his supporter Dean Mansel; and between them they gave the decisive proof that the orthodox cause had been philosophically lost while being socially won, since their theism emphasized in the strongest way the negative criticism of Kant, leaving deity void of all philosophically cognizable qualities. Hamilton and Mansel alike have received

<sup>1</sup> Under the pseudonym of Philip Beauchamp. See *The Minor Works of George Grote*, edited by Professor Bain, 1873, p. 18; *Athenæum*, May 31, 1873; J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 69; and *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Morell, *Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, ii, 620; and *Life and Corr. of Whately*, by E. Jane Whately, abridged ed. p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Articles in the *Edinburgh Review* (1829-30); and professorial lectures at Edinburgh 1839-56. <sup>4</sup> Cp. Veitch's *Memoir*, pp. 195-97.



severe treatment at the hands of Mill and others for the calculated irrationalism and the consequent immoralism of their doctrine, which insisted on attributing moral bias to an admittedly Unknowable Absolute, and on standing for Christian mysteries on the skeptical ground that reason is an imperfect instrument, and that our moral faculties and feelings "demand" the traditional beliefs. But they did exactly what was needed to force rationalism upon open and able minds. It is indeed astonishing to find so constantly repeated by trained reasoners the old religious blunder of *reasoning* from the *inadequacy* of reason to the need for faith. The disputant says in effect: "Our reason is not to be trusted; let us then on that score rationally decide to believe what is handed down to us"; for if the argument is not a process of reasoning it is nothing; and if it is to stand, it is an assertion of the validity it denies. Evidently the number of minds capable of such self-stultification is great; but among minds at once honest and competent the number capable of detecting the absurdity must be considerable; and the invariable result of its use down to our own time is to multiply unbelievers in the creed so absurdly defended.

It is difficult to free Mansel from the charge of seeking to confuse and bewilder; but mere contact with the processes of reasoning in his Bampton Lectures is almost refreshing after much acquaintance with the see-saw of vituperation and platitude which up to that time mostly passed muster for defence of religion in nineteenth-century England. He made for a revival of intellectual life. And he suffered enough at the hands of his co-religionists, including F. D. Maurice, to set up something like compassion in the mind of the retrospective rationalist. Accused of having adopted "the absolute and infinite, as defined after the leaders of German metaphysics," as a "synonym for the true and living God," he protested that he had done "exactly the reverse. I assert that the absolute and infinite, as defined in the German metaphysics, *and in all other metaphysics with which I am acquainted*, is a notion which destroys itself by its own contradictions. I believe *also* that God is, in some manner incomprehensible by me, both absolute and infinite; and that those attributes exist in Him *without any repugnance or contradiction at all*. Hence I maintain throughout that *the infinite of philosophy is not the true infinite*."<sup>1</sup> Charged further with borrowing

<sup>1</sup> Bampton Lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought*, 4th ed. pref. p. xxxvi, note. After thus declaring all metaphysics to be profoundly delusive, Mansel shows at his worst (*Philosophy of the Conditioned*, 1866, p. 188) by disparaging Mill as an incompetent metaphysician.

without acknowledgment from Newman, the Dean was reduced to crediting Newman with "transcendent gifts" while claiming to have read almost nothing by him,<sup>1</sup> and winding up with a quotation from Newman inviting men to seek solace from the sense of nescience in blind belief.

It was said of Hamilton that, "having scratched his eyes out in the bush of reason, he scratched them in again in the bush of faith"; and when that could obviously be said also of his reverend pupil, the philosophic tide was clearly on the turn. Within two years of the delivery of Mansel's lectures his and Hamilton's philosophic positions were being confidently employed as an open and avowed basis for the naturalistic *First Principles* (1860-62) of HERBERT SPENCER, wherein, with an unfortunate laxity of metaphysic on the author's own part, and a no less unfortunate lack of consistency as regards the criticism of religious and anti-religious positions,<sup>2</sup> the new cosmic conceptions are unified in a masterly conception of evolution as a universal law. This service, the rendering of which was quite beyond the capacity of the multitude of Spencer's metaphysical critics, marks him as one of the great influences of his age. Strictly, the book is a "System of Nature" rather than a philosophy in the sense of a study of the grounds and limitations of knowledge; that is to say, it is on the former ground alone that it is coherent and original. But its very imperfections on the other side have probably promoted its reception among minds already shaken in theology by the progress of concrete science; while at the same time such imperfections give a hostile foothold to the revived forms of theism. In any case, the "agnostic" foundation supplied by the despairing dialectic of Hamilton and Mansel has always constituted the most effective part of the Spencerian case.

11. The effect of the ethical pressure of the deistic attack on the intelligence of educated Christians was fully seen even within the Anglican Church before the middle of the century. The unstable Coleridge, who had gone round the whole compass of opinion<sup>3</sup> when he began to wield an influence over the more sensitive of the younger Churchmen, was strenuous in a formal affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, but no less anxious to modify the doctrine of Atone-

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* p. xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer has avowed in his *Autobiography* (ii, 75) what might be surmized by critical readers, that he wrote the First Part of *First Principles* in order to guard against the charge of "materialism." This motive led him to misrepresent "atheism," and there was a touch of retribution in the general disregard of his disavowal of materialism, at which he expresses surprise. The broad fact remains that for prudential reasons he set forth at the very outset of his system a set of conclusions which could properly be reached only at the end, if at all.

<sup>3</sup> As to his fluctuations, which lasted till his death, cp. the author's *New Essays towards a Critical Method*, 1897, pp. 144-47, 149-54, 168-69.



ment on which the conception of the Trinity was historically founded. In the hands of Maurice the doctrine of sacrifice became one of example to the end of subjective regeneration of the sinner. This view, which was developed by John the Scot—perhaps from hints in Origen<sup>1</sup>—and again by Bernardino Ochino,<sup>2</sup> is specially associated with the teaching of Coleridge; but it was quite independently held in England before him by the Anglican Dr. Parr (1747–1825), who appears to have been heterodox upon most points in the orthodox creed,<sup>3</sup> and who, like Servetus and Coleridge and Hegel, held by a modal as against a “personal” Trinity. The advance in ethical sensitiveness which had latterly marked English thought, and which may perhaps be traced in equal degrees to the influence of Shelley and to that of Bentham, counted for much in this shifting of Christian ground. The doctrine of salvation by faith was by many felt to be morally indefensible. Such Unitarian accommodations presumably reconciled to Christianity and the Church many who would otherwise have abandoned them; and the only orthodox rebuttal seems to have been the old and dangerous resort to the Butlerian argument, to the effect that the God of Nature shows no such benign fatherliness as the anti-sacrificial school ascribe to him.<sup>4</sup> This could only serve to emphasize the moral bankruptcy of Butler’s philosophy, to which Mansel, in an astonishing passage of his Bampton Lectures,<sup>5</sup> had shown himself incredibly blind.

The same pressure of moral argument was doubtless potent in the development of “Socinian” or other rationalistic views in the Protestant Churches of Germany, Holland, Hungary, Switzerland, and France in the first half of the century. Such development had gone so far that by the middle of the century the Churches in question were, to the eye of an English evangelical champion, predominantly rationalistic, and in that sense “infidel.”<sup>6</sup> Reactions have been claimed before and since; but in our own age there is little to show for them. In the United States, again, the ethical element probably predominated in the recoil of EMERSON from Christian orthodoxy even of the Unitarian stamp, as well as in the heresy of THEODORE PARKER, whose aversion to the theistic ethic

<sup>1</sup> Baur, *Die christliche Lehre der Versöhnung*, 1838, pp. 54–63, 124–31.

<sup>2</sup> Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino*, Eng. tr. pp. 248–87.

<sup>3</sup> Field’s *Memoirs of Parr*, 1828, ii, 363, 374–79.

<sup>4</sup> See Pearson’s *Infidelity, its Aspects, Causes, and Agencies*, 1853, p. 215 sq. The position of Maurice and Parr (associated with other and later names) is there treated as one of the prevailing forms of “infidelity,” and called spiritualism. In Germany the orthodox made the same dangerous answer to the theistic criticism. See the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd. ed. ii, 242–43.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. cited, pp. 158–59.

<sup>6</sup> Pearson, as cited, pp. 560–62, 568–79, 584–84.

of Jonathan Edwards was so strong as to make him blind to the reasoning power of that stringent Calvinist.

12. A powerful and wholesome stimulus was given to English thought throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century by the many-sided influence of JOHN STUART MILL, who, beginning by a brilliant *System of Logic* (1843), which he followed up with a less durable exposition of the *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), became through his shorter works *On Liberty* and on various political problems one of the most popular of the serious writers of his age. It was not till the posthumous issue of his *Autobiography* and his *Three Essays on Religion* (1874) that many of his readers realized how complete was his alienation from the current religion, from his childhood up. In his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy* (1865), indeed, he had indignantly repudiated the worship of an unintelligibly good God; but he had there seemed to take for granted the God-idea; and save in inconclusive passages in the *Liberty* (1859) he had indicated no rejection of Christianity. But though the *Liberty* was praised by Kingsley and condemned by Carlyle, it made for freethinking no less than for tolerance; and his whole life’s work made for reason. “The saint of rationalism” was Gladstone’s<sup>1</sup> account of him as a parliamentarian. His posthumous presentment to the world of the strange conception of a limited-liability God, the victim of circumstances—a theorem which meets neither the demand for a theistic explanation of the universe nor the worshipper’s craving for support—sets up some wonder as to his philosophy; but was probably as disintegrative of orthodoxy as a more philosophical performance would have been.

#### SECTION 7.—MODERN JEWRY

In the culture-life of the dispersed Jews, in the modern period, there is probably as much variety of credence in regard to religion as occurs in the life of Christendom so called. Such names as those of Spinoza, Jacobi, Moses Mendelssohn, Heine, and Karl Marx tell sufficiently of Jewish service to freethought; and each one of these must have had many disciples of his own race. Deism among the educated Jews of Germany in the eighteenth century was probably common.<sup>2</sup> The famous Rabbi Elijah of Wilna (d. 1797), entitled the Gaon, “the great one,” set up a movement of relatively rationalistic pietism that led to the establishment in 1803 of a Rabbinical

<sup>1</sup> Letter in W. L. Courtney’s *J. S. Mill*, 1889, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 59, 71. Schechter writes with a marked Judaic prejudice.



college at Walosin, which has flourished ever since, and had in 1888 no fewer than 400 students, among whose successors there goes on a certain amount of independent study.<sup>1</sup> In the freer world outside critical thought has asserted itself within the pale of orthodox Judaism; witness such a writer as Nachman Krochmal (1785-1840), whose posthumous *Guide to the Perplexed of the Time*<sup>2</sup> (1851), though not a scientific work, is ethically and philosophically in advance of the orthodox Judaism of its age. Of Krochmal it has been said that he "was inspired in his work by the study of Hegel, just as Maimonides had been by the study of Aristotle."<sup>3</sup> The result is only a liberalizing of Jewish orthodoxy in the light of historic study,<sup>4</sup> such as went on among Christians in the same period; but it is thus a stepping-stone to further science.

To-day educated Jewry is divided in somewhat the same proportions as Christendom into absolute rationalists and liberal and fanatical believers; and representatives of all three types, of different social grades, may be found among the Zionists, whose movement for the acquisition of a new racial home has attracted so much attention and sympathy in recent years. Whether or not that movement attains to any decisive political success, Judaism clearly cannot escape the solvent influences which affect all European opinion. As in the case of the Christian Church, the synagogue in the centres of culture keeps the formal adherence of some who no longer think on its plane; but while attempts are made from time to time to set up more rationalistic institutions for Jews with the modern bias, the general tendency is to a division between devotees of the old forms and those who have decided to live by reason.

#### SECTION 8.—THE ORIENTAL CIVILIZATIONS

We have already seen, in discussing the culture histories of India, China, and Moslem Persia, how ancient elements of rationalism continue to germinate more or less obscurely in the unpropitious soils of Asiatic life. Ignorance is in most oriental countries too immensely preponderant to permit of any other species of survival. But sociology, while recognizing the vast obstacles to the higher life presented by conditions which with a fatal facility multiply the lower, can set no limit to the possibilities of upward evolution. The case of Japan is a sufficient rebuke to the thoughtless iterators of the formula of the "unprogressiveness of the East." While a

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* pp. 117-18.

<sup>2</sup> This title imitates that of the famous *More Nebuchim* of Maimonides.

<sup>3</sup> Zunz, cited by Schechter, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Whence Krochmal is termed the Father of Jewish Science. *Id.* p. 81.

cheerfully superstitious religion is there still normal among the mass, the transformation of the political ideals and practice of the nation under the influence of European example is so great as to be unparalleled in human history; and it has inevitably involved the substitution of rationalism for supernaturalism among the great majority of the educated younger generation. The late YUKICHI FUKUZAWA, who did more than any other man to prepare the Japanese mind for the great transformation effected in his time, was spontaneously a freethinker from his childhood;<sup>1</sup> and through a long life of devoted teaching he trained thousands to a naturalist way of thought. That they should revert to Christian or native orthodoxy seems as impossible as such an evolution is seen to be in educated Hindostan, where the higher orders of intelligence are probably not relatively more common than among the Japanese. The final question, there as everywhere, is one of social reconstruction and organization; and in the enormous population of China the problem, though very different in degree of imminence, is the same in kind. Perhaps the most hopeful consideration of all is that of the ever-increasing inter-communication which makes European and American progress tend in every succeeding generation to tell more and more on Asiatic life.

As to Japan, Professor B. H. Chamberlain pronounced twenty years ago that the Japanese "now bow down before the shrine of Herbert Spencer" (*Things Japanese*, 3rd ed. 1898, p. 321. Cp. *Religious Systems of the World*, 3rd ed. p. 103), proceeding in another connection (p. 352) to describe them as *essentially* an undevotional people. Such a judgment would be hard to sustain. The Japanese people in the past have exhibited the amount of superstition normal in their culture stage (cp. the *Voyages de C. P. Thunberg au Japon*, French tr. 1796, iii, 206); and in our own day they differ from Western peoples on this side merely in respect of their greater general serenity of temperament. There were in Japan in 1894 no fewer than 71,831 Buddhist temples, and 190,803 Shinto temples and shrines; and the largest temple of all, costing "several million dollars," was built in the last dozen years of the nineteenth century. To the larger shrines there are habitual pilgrimages, the numbers annually visiting one leading Buddhist shrine reaching from 200,000 to 250,000, while at the Shintô shrine of Kompira the pilgrims are said to number about 900,000 each year. (See *The Evolution of the Japanese*, 1903, by L. Gulick, an American missionary organizer.)

<sup>1</sup> *A Life of Mr. Yukichi Fukuzawa*, by Asatarô Miyamori, revised by Prof. E. H. Vickers, Tokyo, 1902, pp. 9-10.



Professor Chamberlain appears to have construed "devotional" in the light of a special conception of true devotion. Yet a Christian observer testifies, of the revivalist sect of Nichirenites, "the Ranters of Buddhism," that "the wildest excesses that seek the mantle of religion in other lands are by them equalled if not excelled" (Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire*, 1876, p. 163); and Professor Chamberlain admits that "the religion of the family binds them [the Japanese in general, including the 'most materialistic'] down in truly sacred bonds"; while another writer, who thinks Christianity desirable for Japan, though he apparently ranks Japanese morals above Christian, declares that in his travels he was much reassured by the superstition of the innkeepers, feeling thankful that his hosts were "not Agnostics or Secularists," but devout believers in future punishments (Tracy, *Rambles through Japan without a Guide*, 1892, pp. 131, 276, etc.).

A third authority with Japanese experience, Professor W. G. Dixon, while noting a generation ago that "among certain classes in Japan not only religious earnestness but fanaticism and superstition still prevail," decides that "at the same time it remains true that the Japanese are not in the main a very religious people, and that at the present day religion is in lower repute than probably it has ever been in the country's history. Religious indifference is one of the prominent features of new Japan" (*The Land of the Morning*, 1882, p. 517). The reconciliation of these estimates lies in the recognition of the fact that the Japanese populace is religious in very much the same way as those of Italy and England, while the more educated classes are rationalistic, not because of any "essential" incapacity for "devotion," but because of enlightenment and lack of countervailing social pressure. To the eye of the devotional Protestant the Catholics of Italy, with their regard to externals, seem "essentially" irreligious; and *vice versa*. Such formulas miss science. Two hundred years ago Charron, following previous schematists, made a classification in which northerners figured as strong, active, stupid, warlike, and little given to religion; the southerners as slight, abstinent, obstinate, unwarlike, and superstitious; and the "middle" peoples as between the two. *La Sagesse*, liv. i, ch. 42. The cognate formulas of to-day are hardly more trustworthy. Buddhism triumphed over Shintôism in Japan both in ancient and modern times precisely because its lore and ritual make so much more appeal to the devotional sense. (Cp. Chamberlain, pp. 358-62; Dixon, ch. x; *Religious Systems of the World*, pp. 103, 111; Griffis, p. 166.) But the æsthetically charming cult of the family, with its poetic recognition of ancestral spirits (as to which see Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904), seems to hold its ground as well as any.

So universal is sociological like other law that we find in Japan, among some freethinkers, the same disposition as among some in Europe to decide that religion is necessary for the people. Professor Chamberlain (p. 352) cites Fukuzawa, "Japan's most representative thinker and educationist," as openly declaring that "It goes without saying that the maintenance of peace and security in society requires a religion. For this purpose any religion will do. I lack a religious nature, and have never believed in any religion. I am thus open to the charge that I am advising others to be religious while I am not so. Yet my conscience does not permit me to clothe myself with religion when I have it not at heart.....Of religions there are several kinds—Buddhism, Christianity, and what not. From my standpoint there is no more difference between those than between green tea and black.....See that the stock is well selected and the prices cheap....." (*Japan Herald*, September 9, 1897). To this view, however, Fukuzawa did not finally adhere. The Rev. Isaac Dooman, a missionary in Japan who knew him well, testifies to a change that was taking place in his views in later life regarding the value of religion. In an unpublished letter to Mr. Robert Young, of Kobe, Mr. Dooman says that on one occasion, when conversing on the subject of Christianity, Fukuzawa remarked: "There was a time when I advocated its adoption as a means to elevate our lower classes; but, after finding out that all Christian countries have their own lower classes just as bad, if not worse than ours, I changed my mind." Further reflection, marked by equal candour, may lead the pupils of Fukuzawa to see that nations cannot be led to adore any form of "tea" by the mere assurance of its indispensableness from leaders who confess they never take any. His view is doubtless shared by those priests concerning whom "it may be questioned whether in their fundamental beliefs the more scholarly of the Shinshû priests differ very widely from the materialistic agnostics of Europe" (Dixon, p. 516). In this state of things the Christian thinks he sees his special opportunity. Professor Dixon writes (p. 518), in the manner of the missionary, that "decaying shrines and broken gods are to be seen everywhere. Not only is there indifference, but there is a rapidly-growing skepticism. ....The masses too are becoming affected by it.....Shintôism and.....Buddhism are doomed. What is to take their place? ....It must be either Christianity or Atheism. We have the brightest hopes that the former will triumph in the near future....."

The American missionary before cited, Mr. Gulick, argues alternately that the educated Japanese are religious and that they are not, meaning that they have "religious instincts," while rejecting current creeds. The so-called religious instinct



is in fact simply the spirit of moral and intellectual seriousness. Mr. Gulick's summing-up, as distinct from his theory and forecast, is as follows: "For about three hundred years the intelligence of the nation has been dominated by Confucian thought, which rejects active belief in supra-human beings. ....The tendency of all persons trained in Confucian classics was towards thoroughgoing skepticism as to divine beings and their relation to this world. For this reason, beyond doubt, has Western agnosticism found so easy an entrance into Japan. ....Complete indifference to religion is characteristic of the educated classes of to-day. Japanese and foreigners, Christians and non-Christians alike, unite in this opinion. The impression usually conveyed by this statement, however, is that agnosticism is a new thing in Japan. In point of fact, the old agnosticism is merely reinforced by.....the agnosticism of the West" (*The Evolution of the Japanese*, pp. 286-87). This may be taken as broadly accurate. Cp. the author's paper on "Freethought in Japan" in the *Agnostic Annual* for 1906. Professor E. H. Parker notes (*China and Religion*, 1905, p. 263) that "the Japanese in translating Western books are beginning, to the dismay of our missionaries, to leave out all the Christianity that is in them."

But a very grave danger to the intellectual and moral life of Japan has been of late set up by a new application of Shintôism, on the lines of the emperor-worship of ancient Rome. A recent pamphlet by Professor Chamberlain, entitled *The Invention of a New Religion* (R. P. A.; 1912), incidentally shows that the Japanese temperament is so far from being "essentially" devoid of devotion as to be capable of building up a fresh cultus to order. It appears that since the so-called Restoration of 1868, when the Imperial House, after more than two centuries of seclusion in Kyoto, was brought from its retirement and the Emperor publicly installed as ruler by right of his divine origin, the sentiment of religious devotion to the Imperial House has been steadily inculcated, reaching its height during the Russo-Japanese War, when the messages of victorious generals and admirals piously ascribed their successes over the enemy to the "virtues of the Imperial Ancestors." In every school throughout the Empire there hangs a portrait of the emperor, which is regarded and treated as is a sacred image in Russia and in Catholic countries. The curators of schools have been known on occasion of fire and earthquake to save the imperial portrait before wife or child; and their action has elicited popular acclamation. On the imperial birthday teachers and pupils assemble, and passing singly before the portrait, bow in solemn adoration.

The divine origin of the Imperial House and the grossly mythical history of the early emperors are taught as articles of faith in Japanese schools precisely as the cosmogony of Genesis has been taught for ages in the schools of Christendom. Some years ago a professor who exposed the absurdity of the chronology upon which the religion is based was removed from his post, and a teacher who declined to bow before a casket containing an imperial rescript was dismissed. His life was, in fact, for some time in danger from the fury of the populace. So dominant has Mikado-worship become that some Japanese Christian pastors have endeavoured to reconcile it with Christianity, and to be Mikado-worshippers and Christ-worshippers at the same time.<sup>1</sup> All creeds are nominally tolerated in Japan, but avowed heresy as to the divine origin of the Imperial House is a bar to public employment, and exposes the heretic to suspicion of treason. The new religion, which is merely old Shintôism revised, has been invented as a political expedient, and may possibly not long survive the decease of Mutsu Hito, the late emperor, who continued throughout his reign to live in comparative seclusion, and has been succeeded by a young prince educated on European lines. But the cult has obtained a strong hold upon the people; and by reason of social pressure receives the conventional support of educated men exactly as Christianity does in England, America, Germany, and Russia.

Thus there is not "plain sailing" for freethought in Japan. In such a political atmosphere neither moral nor scientific thought has a good prognosis; and if it be not changed for the better much of the Japanese advance may be lost. Rationalism on any large scale is always a product of culture; and culture for the mass of the people of Japan has only recently begun. Down till the middle of the nineteenth century nothing more than sporadic freethought existed.<sup>2</sup> Some famous captains were irreverent as to the omens; and in a seventeenth-century manual of the principles of government, ascribed to the great founder of modern feudalism, Iyeyasu, the sacrifices of vassals at the graves of their lords are denounced,

<sup>1</sup> Pamphlet cited, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> A curious example of sporadic freethought occurs in a pamphlet published towards the end of the eighteenth century. In 1771 a writer named Motoôri began a propaganda in favour of Shintôism with the publication of a tract entitled *Spirit of Straightening*. This tract emphatically asserted the divinity of the Mikado, and elicited a reply from another writer named Ichikawa, who wrote: "The Japanese word *kami* (God) was simply a title of honour; but in consequence of its having been used to translate the Chinese character *shin* (*shên*) a meaning has come to be attached to it which it did not originally possess. The ancestors of the Mikados were not Gods, but men, and were no doubt worthy to be revered for their virtues; but their acts were not miraculous nor supernatural. If the ancestors of living men were not human beings, they are more likely to have been birds or beasts than Gods." Art.: "The Revival of Pure Shinto," by Sir E. N. Satow, in *Trans. Asiatic Society of Japan*.



and Confucius is even cited as ridiculing the burial of effigies in substitution.<sup>1</sup> But, as elsewhere under similar conditions, such displays of originality were confined to the ruling caste.<sup>2</sup> I have seen, indeed, a delightful popular satire, apparently a product of mother-wit, on the methods of popular Buddhist shrine-making; but, supposing it to be genuine and vernacular, it can stand only for that measure of freethought which is never absent from any society not pithed by a long process of religious tyranny. Old Japan, with its intense feudal discipline and its indurated etiquette, exhibited the social order, the grace, the moral charm, and the intellectual vacuity of a hive of bees. The higher mental life was hardly in evidence; and the ethical literature of native inspiration is of no importance.<sup>3</sup> To this day the educated Chinese, though lacking in Japanese "efficiency" and devotion to drill of all kinds, are the more freely intellectual in their habits of mind. The Japanese feudal system, indeed, was so immitigably ironbound, so incomparably destructive of individuality in word, thought, and deed, that only in the uncoded life of art and handicraft was any free play of faculty possible. What has happened of late is the rapid and docile assimilation of western science. Another and a necessarily longer step is the independent development of the speculative and critical intelligence; and in the East, as in the West, this is subject to economic conditions.

A similar generalization holds good as to the other Oriental civilizations. Analogous developments to those seen in the latter-day Mohammedan world, and equally marked by fluctuation, have been noted in the mental life alike of the non-Mohammedan and the Mohammedan peoples of India; and at the present day the thought of the relatively small educated class is undoubtedly much affected by the changes going on in that of Europe, and especially of England. The vast Indian masses, however, are far from anything in the nature of critical culture; and though some system of education for them is probably on the way to establishment,<sup>4</sup> their life must long remain quasi-primitive, mentally as well as physically. Buddhism is theoretically more capable of adaptation to a rationalist view of life than is Christianity; but its intellectual activities at present seem to tend more towards an "esoteric" credulity than towards a rational or scientific adjustment to life.

<sup>1</sup> Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904, p. 313; cp. p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the third emperor of the Ming dynasty in China (1425-1435), referring to the belief in a future life, makes the avowal: "I am fain to sigh with despair when I see that in our own day men are just as superstitious as ever" (Prof. E. H. Parker, *China and Religion*, 1905, p. 99).

<sup>3</sup> See Hearn, as cited, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Sir F. S. P. Lely, *Suggestions for the Better Governing of India*, 1906, p. 59.

Of the nature of the influence of Buddhism in Burmah, where it has prospered, a vivid and thoughtful account is given in the work of H. Fielding, *The Soul of a People*, 1898. At its best the cult there deifies the Buddha; elsewhere, it is interwoven with aboriginal polytheism and superstition (Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 207-211; Max Müller, *Anthro. Rel.*, p. 132).

Within Brahmanism, again, there have been at different times attempts to set up partly naturalistic reforms in religious thought—e.g. that of Chaitanya in the sixteenth century; but these have never been pronouncedly freethinking, and Chaitanya preached a "surrender of all to Krishna," very much in the manner of evangelical Christianity. Finally he has been deified by his followers. (Müller, *Nat. Rel.* p. 100; *Phys. Rel.* p. 356.)

More definitely freethinking was the monotheistic cult set up among the Sikhs in the fifteenth century, as the history runs, by Nanak, who had been influenced both by Parsees and by Mohammedans, and whose ethical system repudiated caste. But though Nanak objected to any adoration of himself, he and all his descendants have been virtually deified by his devotees, despite their profession of a theoretically pantheistic creed. (Cp. De la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. pp. 659-62; Müller, *Phys. Rel.* p. 355.) Trumpp (*Die Religion der Sikhs*, 1881, p. 123) tells of other Sikh sects, including one of a markedly atheistic character belonging to the nineteenth century; but all alike seem to gravitate towards Hinduism.

Similarly among the Jainas, who compare with the Buddhists in their nominal atheism as in their tenderness to animals and in some other respects, there has been decline and compromise; and their numbers appear steadily to dwindle, though in India they survived while Buddhism disappeared. Cp. De la Saussaye, *Manual*, pp. 557-63; Rev. J. Robson, *Hinduism*, 1874, pp. 80-86; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 141. Finally, the Brahmo-Somaj movement of the nineteenth century appears to have come to little in the way of rationalism (Mitchell, *Hinduism*, pp. 224-46; De la Saussaye, pp. 669-71; Tiele, p. 160).

The principle of the interdependence of the external and the internal life, finally, applies even in the case of Turkey. The notion that Turkish civilization in Europe is unimprovable, though partly countenanced by despondent thinkers even among the enlightened Turks,<sup>1</sup> had no justification in social science, though bad politics may ruin the Turkish, like other Moslem States; and although Turkish freethinking has not in general passed the theistic stage,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See article on "The Future of Turkey" in the *Contemporary Review*, April, 1899, by "A Turkish Official."

<sup>2</sup> Yet, as early as the date of the Crimean War, it was noted by an observer that "young Turkey makes profession of atheism." Uccini, *La Turquie actuelle*, 1855, p. 361. Cp. Sir



and its spread is grievously hindered by the national religiosity,<sup>1</sup> which the age-long hostility of the Christian States so much tends to intensify, a gradual improvement in the educational and political conditions would suffice to evolve it, according to the observed laws of all civilization. It may be that a result of the rationalistic evolution in the other European States will be to make them intelligently friendly to such a process, where at present they are either piously malevolent towards the rival creed or merely self-seeking as against each other's influence on Turkish destinies.

In any case, it cannot seriously be pretended that the mental life of Christian Greece in modern times has yielded, apart from services to simple scholarship, a much better result to the world at large than has that of Turkey. The usual reactions in individual cases of course take place. An American traveller writing in 1856 notes how illiterate Greek priests glory in their ignorance, "asserting that a more liberal education has the effect of making atheists of the youth." He adds that he has "known several deacons and others in the University [of Athens] that were skeptics even as to the truth of religion," and would gladly have become laymen if they could have secured a livelihood.<sup>2</sup> But there was then and later in the century no measurable movement of a rationalistic kind. At the time of the emancipation the Greek priesthood was "in general at once the most ignorant and the most vicious portion of the community";<sup>3</sup> and it remained socially predominant and reactionary. "Whatever progress has been made in Greece has received but little assistance from them."<sup>4</sup> Liberal-minded professors in the theological school were mutinied against by bigoted students,<sup>5</sup> a type still much in evidence at Athens; and the liberal thinker Theophilus Kaïres, charged with teaching "atheistic doctrines," and found guilty with three of his followers, died of jail fever while his appeal to the Areopagus was pending.<sup>6</sup>

Thus far Christian bigotry seems to have held its own in what once was Hellas. On the surface, Greece shows little trace of instructed freethought; while in Bulgaria, by Greek testimony, school teachers openly proclaim their rationalism, and call for the exclusion of religious teaching from the schools.<sup>7</sup> Despite the

G. Campbell, *A Very Recent View of Turkey*, 2nd ed. 1878, p. 65. Vambéry makes somewhat light of such tendencies (*Der Islam im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 1875, pp. 185, 187); but admits cases of atheism even among mollahs, as a result of European culture (p. 101).  
<sup>1</sup> Ubicini (p. 344), with Vambéry and most other observers, pronounces the Turks the most religious people in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Baird, *Modern Greece*, New York, 1856, pp. 123-24.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 320.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, p. 339.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, p. 340.

<sup>7</sup> Prof. Neocles Karasis, *Greeks and Bulgarians in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London, 1907, pp. 15-17, citing a Bulgarian journal.

political freedom of the Christian State, there has thus far occurred there no such general fertilization by the culture of the rest of Europe as is needed to produce a new intellectual evolution of any importance. The mere geographical isolation of modern Greece from the main currents of European thought and commerce is probably the most retardative of her conditions; and it is hard to see how it can be countervailed. Italy, in comparison, is pulsating with original life, industrial and intellectual. But, given either a renaissance of Mohammedan civilization or a great political reconstruction such as is latterly on foot, the whole life of the nearer East may take a new departure; and in such an evolution Greece would be likely to share.

## CONCLUSION

ANY fuller survey of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century will but reveal more fully the signal and ever-widening growth of rational thought among all classes of the more advanced nations, and among the more instructed of the less advanced. The retrospect of the whole past tells of a continuous evolution, which in the twentieth century proceeds more extensively than ever before. There has emerged the curious fact that in our own country a measure of rational doubt has been almost constantly at work in the sphere in which it could perhaps least confidently be expected—to wit, that of poetry. From Chaucer onwards it is hard to find a great orthodox poet. Even Spenser was as much Platonist as Christian; and Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Arnold, and Browning (to name no others) in their various ways baffle the demand of faith. Latterly, the sex which has always been reckoned the more given to religion has shown many signs of adaptation to the higher law. In Britain, as in France, women began to appear in the ranks of reason in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth the number has increased at a significant rate. Already in the fierce battles fought in the time of reaction after the French Revolution women took their place on the side of freedom; and Frances Wright (Madame d'Arusmont) played a notable part as a free-thinking publicist and philanthropist.<sup>2</sup> Since her day the names of

<sup>1</sup> In the *Edinburgh Mirror* of 1779 (No. 30) Henry Mackenzie speaks of women free-thinkers as a new phenomenon.

<sup>2</sup> "She bought 2,000 acres in Tennessee, and peopled them with slave families she purchased and redeemed" (Wheeler, *Biog. Dict.*).



Harriet Martineau and George Eliot tell of the continual gain of knowledge; and women rationalists are now to be counted by thousands in all the more civilized countries.

The same law holds of public life in general. Gladstone eagerly maintained in his latter years that politicians, in virtue of their practical hold of life, were little given to skepticism; but the facts were and are increasingly against him. The balance of the evidence is against the ascription of orthodoxy to either of the Pitts, or to Fox; and we have seen that the statesmen of the American Revolution, as of the French, were in general deists. Garibaldi<sup>1</sup> in Italy, and Gambetta in France, were freethinkers; Lincoln and his opponent, Douglas, were deists; towards the close of the century, in New Zealand, Sir Robert Stout and the late Mr. John Ballance, avowed rationalists, were among the foremost politicians of their generation; and in the English Cabinet rationalism began to be represented in the person of Lord Morley.

While such developments have been possible in the fierce light of political strife, the process of disintegration and decomposition has proceeded in society at large till unbelief can hardly be reckoned a singularity. Within the pale of all the Christian Churches dogmatic belief has greatly dwindled, and goes on dwindling: and "Christianity" is made to figure more and more as an ethical doctrine which has abandoned its historical foundations, while preserving formulas and rituals which have no part in rational ethics. The mythical cosmogony out of which the whole originally grew is no longer believed in by any educated person, though it is habitually presented to the young as divine truth. Thousands of clergymen, economically gripped to a false position, would gladly rectify their professed creeds, but cannot; because the political and economic bases involve the consent of the majority, and changes cannot be made without angry resistance and uproar among the less instructed multitude of all classes. The Protestant Churches collectively dread to figure as repudiating the historic creed; while the Roman Catholic Church, conscious of the situation, maintains a semblance of rigid discipline and a minimum standard of instruction for its adherents, counting on holding its ground while the faculty of uncritical faith subsists. Only by the silent alienation of the more thoughtful and sincere minds from the priesthood can the show of orthodoxy be maintained even within the Catholic pale.

In all orders alike, nevertheless, the "practice" of religion decays

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, 1903, ii, 110-11, as to the embarrassment felt in English official circles at the time of Garibaldi's visit.

with the theory. The Churches are constantly challenged to justify their existence by social reforms and philanthropic works: no other plea passes as generally valid; and it is only by reason of a general transference of interest from religious to social problems that the decay of belief is disguised. "Piety," in the old sense, counts relatively for little; and while orthodoxy is still a means of advantage in political life, religion counts for nothing in international relations. In the war of 1899-1902, "Bible-loving" England forced a quarrel on the most Bible-loving race in the world; and at the time of the penning of these lines six nations are waging the greatest war of all time irrespectively of racial and religious ties alike, though all alike officially claim the support of Omnipotence. In Berlin a popular preacher edifies great audiences by proclaiming that "God is not neutral"; and his Emperor habitually parades the same faith, with the support of all the theologians of Germany—the State supremely guilty of the whole embroilment, and the deliberate perpetrator of the grossest aggression in modern history. On the side of the Allies "Christianity" is less systematically but still frequently invoked. On both sides the forms of prayer are officially practised by the non-combatants, very much as the Romans in their wars maintained the practice of augury from the entrails of sacrificed victims; and "family prayer" is said to be reviving.

Everywhere, nevertheless, the more rational, remembering how in the "ages of faith" deadly wars were waged for whole generations in the very name of religion, recognize that Christianity furnishes neither control for the present nor solution for the future; and that the hope of civilization lies in the resort of the nations to human standards of sanity and reciprocity. The ties which hold are those of fellow-citizenship.

There can be no doubt among rationalists that if modern civilization escapes the ruin which militarism brought upon those of all previous eras, the principle of reason will continually widen its control, latterly seen to be everywhere strengthening apart from the dangerous persistence of militarist ideals and impulses. When it controls international relations, it will be dominant in the life of thought. In the words of a great fighter for freethought, "No man ever saw a religion die"; and there are abundant survivals of pre-Christian paganism in Europe after two thousand years of Christianity; but it seems likely that when the history of the twentieth century is written it will be recognized that what has historically figured as religion belongs in all its forms to the past.

The question is sometimes raised whether the age of decline will



be marked by movements of active and persecuting fanaticism. Here, again, the answer must be that everything depends upon the general fortunes of civilization. It is significant that a number of clerical voices proclaim a revival of religion as a product of war, while others complain that the state of struggle has a sterilizing effect upon religious life. While organized religions subsist, there will always be adherents with the will to persecute; and from time to time acts of public persecution occur, in addition to many of a private character. But in Britain public persecution is latterly restricted to cases in which the technical offence of "blasphemy" is associated with acts which come under ordinary police jurisdiction. After the unquestionable blasphemies of Arnold and Swinburne had to be officially ignored, it became impossible, in the present stage of civilization, that any serious and decent literary indictment of the prevailing creeds should be made a subject of persecution; and before long, probably, such indictments will be abandoned in the cases of offenders against police regulations.

The main danger appears to lie in Catholic countries, and from the action of the Catholic hierarchy. The common people everywhere, save in the most backward countries, are increasingly disinclined to persecution. In Ireland there is much less of that spirit among the Catholic population than among that of Protestant Ulster. But the infamous execution of Francisco Ferrer in Spain, in 1909, which aroused passionate reprobation in every civilized country, was defended in England and elsewhere with extravagant baseness by Catholic *littérateurs*, who, with their reactionary priests, are the last to learn the lesson of tolerance. The indignation everywhere excited by the judicial murder<sup>1</sup> of Ferrer, however, gives promise that even the most zealous fanatics of the Catholic Church will hesitate again to rouse the wrath of the nations by such a reversion to the methods of the eras of religious rule.

<sup>1</sup> On the whole case see *The Life, Trial, and Death of Francisco Ferrer*, by William Archer: Chapman & Hall, 1911; and *The Martyrdom of Ferrer*, by Joseph McCabe: R. P. A., 1910.

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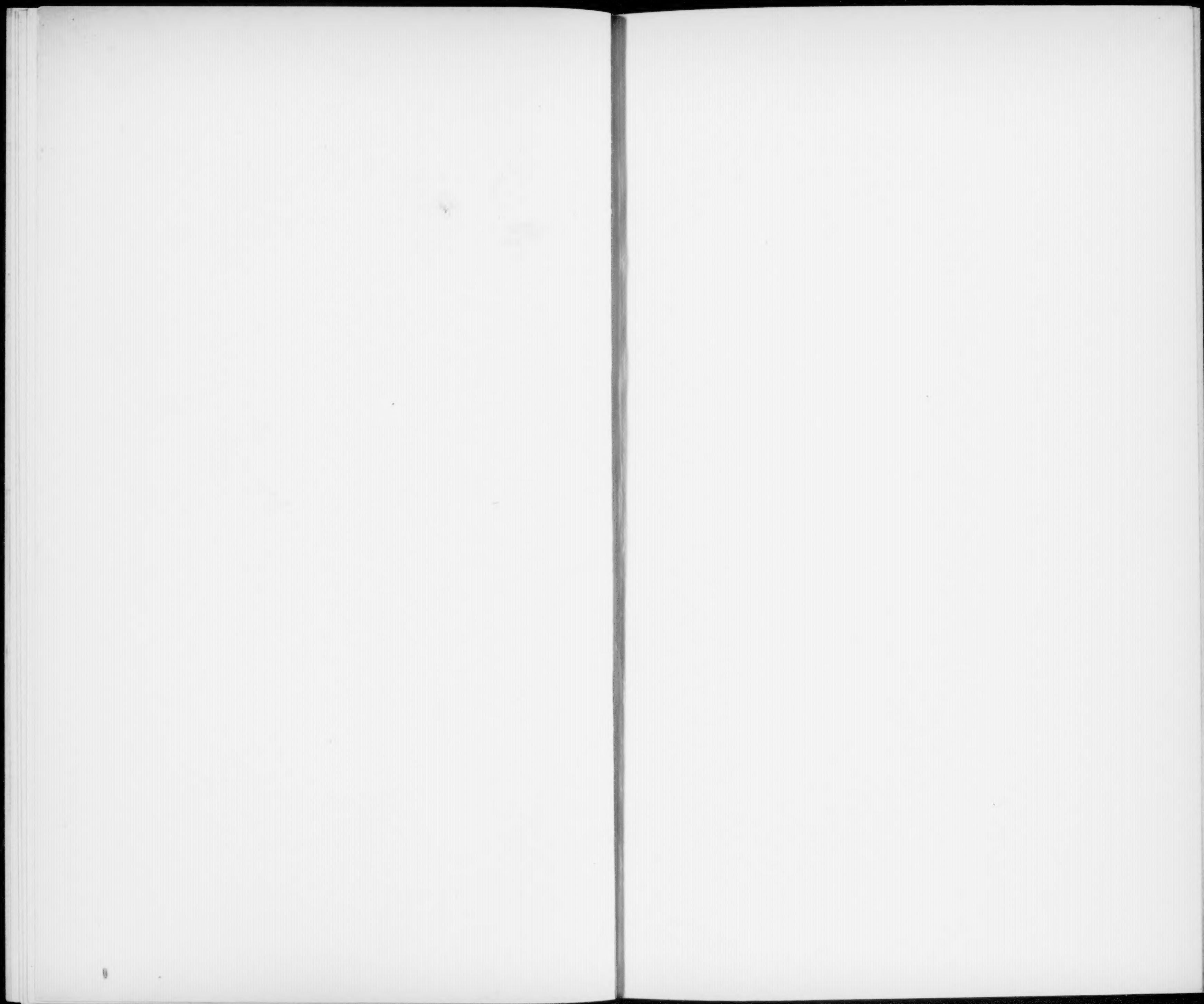
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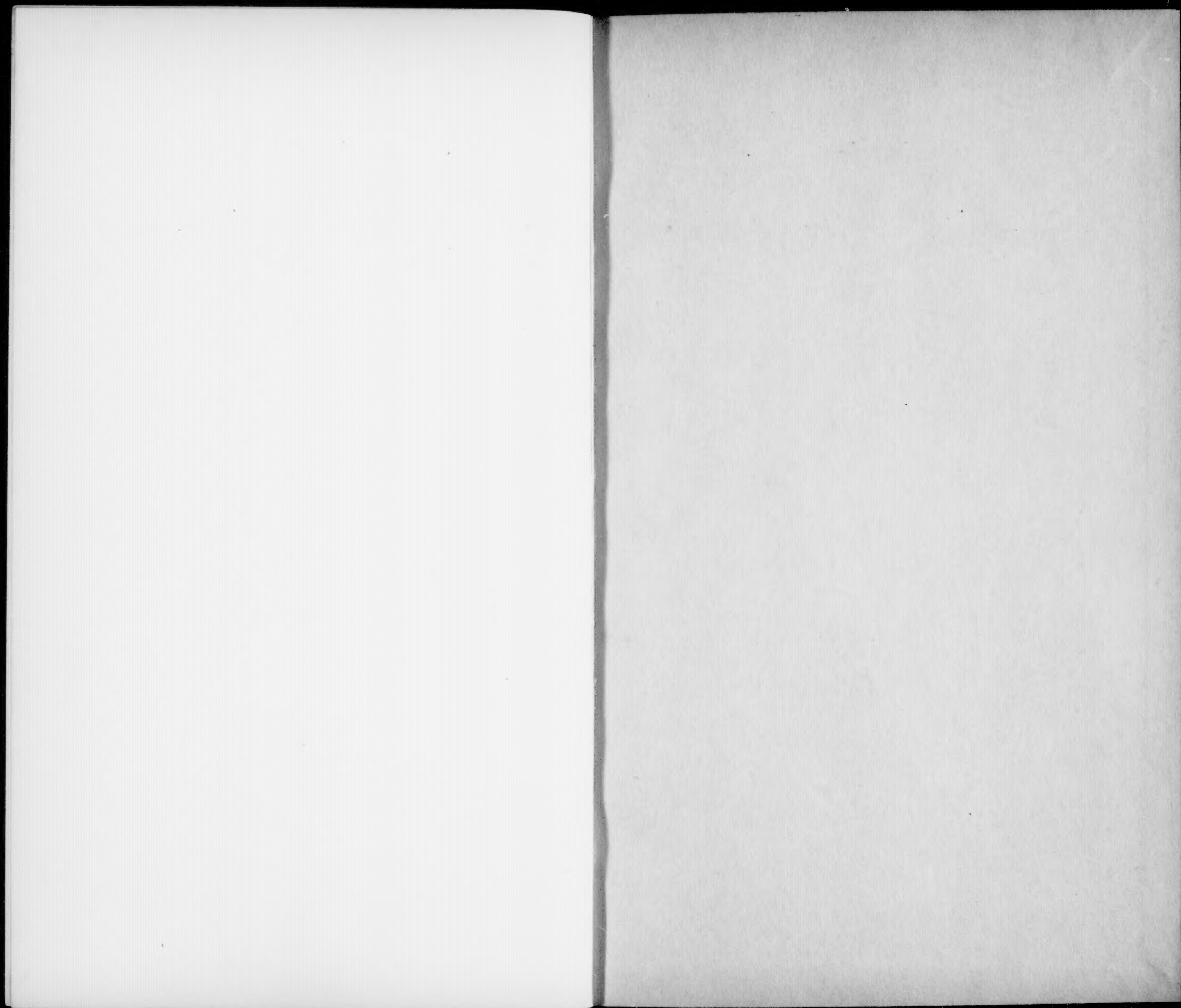
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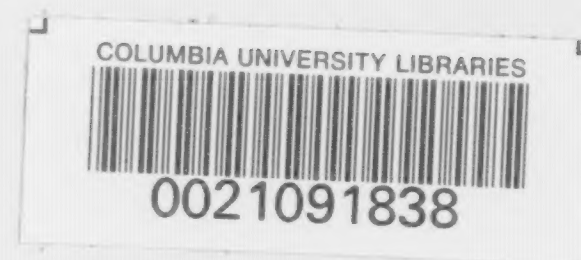




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